Get the Lead Out!

50th Anniversary Folio

Music & Memories of

Dubuque's Bi-Centennial Production

By Paul Hemmer

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The Summer of 1976 - how can it be 50 years ago? Time has raced by quickly. Dubuque is a dramatically different community than it was in that year when the nation was celebrating its 200th Birthday. Now, as we celebrate 250 years of Independence, it's appropriate to look back at a significant musical event in our city - this "Masterpiece on the Mississippi."

Get the Lead Out" – Dubuque's Bi-Centennial Musical.

It was the morning of August 12, 1975, when one of Dubuque's best-known citizens and civic activists, Wayne Norman, stopped at my office at 12th & Iowa in the WDBQ building. With him was a tall, distinguished-looking fellow who had the classic look of a college professor.

"Paul, meet Charles Geroux. He's writing a wonderful play called "Get the Lead Out!" and I'd like you to write music for it so we can have a bi-centennial musical in Dubuque."

What? Where did that come from? Denny Naughton, an attorney friend, suggested that Wayne talk to me. Denny was the chairman of the City of Dubuque Bi-Centennial Commission, and we had spoken in the past about doing a musical pageant for the celebration.

I wrote music for a proposed show called "Child of the River" back in 1967 with a fellow WDBQ broadcaster, Denny Shreefer. Wayne remembered a meeting of the Dubuque Historical Society when we presented the idea. Although they were interested, the group had no money to support the project. And a few months later, Shreefer left Dubuque for another radio job and the project died.

Wayne suggested we have lunch at the Julien Alte Glocke restaurant. I soon learned that Geroux, previously a professor at Clarke College, was now a drama teacher at the prestigious "Cranbrook Prep School" in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on the history of Dubuque's theaters. He had contacted Norman after learning of efforts to save the Orpheum Theater from the accursed urban-renewal wrecking ball. The idea to write a musical developed as they spent days together going over documents from that historic old vaudeville house.

As the discussion continued, it was clear to me that Geroux didn't have a plot, just a few storyline ideas that would incorporate the early German/Irish conflict and lead mining. Wayne created the title "Get the Lead Out!" and suggested we work on something about steam boating because he loved steamboats. After lunch, we went to the Riverboat Lounge, where a piano was available. I sat down and played the title song from "Child of the River," written in 1967, for the show that never happened. They both loved it. We shook hands, and Geroux promised to mail me song ideas and a plotline.

Within a few days, Wayne called a meeting in his office at the Roshek building to plan the project. We discussed a timeline, compensation, finding a producer, and additional financial support needed to launch a big bicentennial summer show for Dubuque.

Geroux returned to Michigan but regularly called with song ideas or mailed preliminary script fragments. By late autumn, it was time for a face-to-face meeting to finalize the plot for what was now "Dubuque's Official Bi-Centennial Musical."

We met on Thanksgiving weekend of 1975 at the Congress Hotel in Chicago. Jan came along and did some Christmas shopping while Geroux and I sat in a room moving around file cards with plot elements. A very out-of-tune piano sitting in the hallway let us try out a few new melodies. We parted company on Sunday with the understanding that we'd meet again after Christmas, before a reading of the script and music for potential backers at Clarke College on December 30th.

By that time, I had written “The Lazy Mississippi” (formerly Child of the River), “Did You See That,” “I’m Bored,” “Can I Ever Be Me,” “You Can’t Cheat an Honest Man,” “This is America,” “Postin’ & Pastin’,” “Pretty Fraulein,” “I Gotta Get Out and Get Away from I-O-WAY,” and the song that would become a show-stopper – “Steamboat Comin’.”

Wayne was thrilled – but wanted more. He envisioned a ballet within the musical, so he called Tanya Bechenova O’Rourke, who operated the Dubuque Academy of Ballet with her talented daughter, Marina. As a youngster, Tanya toured the world with the famed Ballet Russe. Legendary choreographer Agnes DeMille personally selected her to be the principal dancer in the original production of Carousel on Broadway.

We met in the basement of our home, where I had moved the piano to work on music without interrupting my young family. I played over the score, and both were delighted. They agreed to choreograph the show and immediately started instructing me on how to compose music for an eight to ten-minute ballet. It would be a dramatic ending to act one, depicting a grudge match between the German and Irish miners. It should begin slowly, intensify with lots of action music, and end with the leaders of the German and Irish elements vowing that “this battle isn’t over.” As they left that afternoon, Tanya said, “When you're finished, please record it to tape so we can work on it at home.”

I had never written ballet music and didn’t recall ever seeing one, except for a sequence in a movie or a segment on the Ed Sullivan TV variety show, but I set about writing the music. After listening to the tape, Tanya and Marina were happy with the results and made a few suggestions. Orchestrating it for 18 musicians would be the next challenge.

The read-through at Clarke on December 30, 1975, was attended by representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Dubuque Historical Society, several bankers, other businesspeople, local arts people, and a few members of the Woodward family, owners of the Telegraph Herald.

Wayne introduced us and gave a brief account of how we got together and his plans to bring “Get the Lead Out!” to the Orpheum (now called Five Flags Theater) stage for a month-long run in the summer of ’76. Geroux read the story as I played and sang the songs in the appropriate places. The audience enthusiastically endorsed the proposed $30,000 budget and pledged support. We were on our way.

A few plot elements still needed work, including a song that would bring the Germans and Irish together at a picnic, and another to unite the men in their desire to see the can-can dancers who had arrived in Dubuque by steamboat, much to the disgust of the high-class ladies and the local minister. I struggled with that for days without success until one night I woke from a dream, went to the basement piano, and twenty minutes later, “If You Can I Can Go to the Can-Can” was completed.

The villain in GTLO was J. Clinton Purdue. His big song, “You Can’t Cheat an Honest Man,” was originally titled “Floating Gold” for the “Child of the River” project. As Geroux described Purdue, I said, “W.C. Fields would be perfect for playing the role.” We laughed and started discussing our favorite Fields films when “You Can’t Cheat an Honest Man” came to mind. That night, I went to the piano, pulled out my notebook with “Floating Gold,” and wrote new lyrics under the title “You Can’t Cheat an Honest Man.” It remains one of my favorite musical moments in the show.

My good friend and musical mentor, Joe Estock, director of the University Orchestra at UW-Platteville, learned of the plans for "Get the Lead Out" and asked if I would like to write a preview of the music for his late February 1976 pops concert. I couldn't pass up that promotional opportunity, so I scored a 6-minute "Get the Lead Out Suite" which debuted in the Beaux Arts Concert Room at UW-Platteville before several hundred people. Wayne & Edie Norman and other Dubuque couples came to the concert and were even more convinced that the show would be a huge success.

Wayne secured Dorothy Gibbs, a local drama instructor, as the producer, and Shimon Ramirez as scenic designer and assistant director. Geroux would stage direct, and I would direct the pit orchestra. With the score finalized, I began the difficult task of writing the orchestrations and copying parts. Hand cramps were frequent.

Lauretta Stribling and Anne Heineman were selected to design costumes, hair and makeup. David Brune, an assistant professor in drama at Clarke College designed the sets, Don Stribling volunteered to be business and house manager at the theater.

Auditions at Five Flags in late May gave us an excellent all volunteer cast, and five nights per week rehearsals began immediately. I played the piano for all the rehearsals, so I was away from home almost every night. Couple that with the weekend evening gigs with my dance band, and I believe it's a tribute to my wonderful wife and children that our marriage survived.

The plot of "Get the Lead Out!" was loosely based on real events in Dubuque's history and revolved around the German and Irish lead miners of old Dubuque. These rival factions are thrown into a quandary when a St. Louis entrepreneur, Chouteau, claims in federal court that all of Julien Dubuque's mining interests were signed over to him in payment of bad debts. Enter the villain J. Clifton Purdue, bogus insurance vendor, offering to save the day by writing policies to protect the threatened miners. Add to this a love interest, when Gretchen, daughter of the pillar of German society, falls in love with Cormack, an Irish miner's son. The arrival by steamboat of Madame Rienza with her Can-Can troupe creates a moral crisis among the miners and their ladies. "Will the dancers be allowed to take the stage?" becomes the day's social issue. "Get the Lead Out" took the audience back to three eventful summer days in the Dubuque of 1856 when the Irish and German united to meet a common enemy.

Iowa Public Television heard about the show and contacted Wayne to videotape some scenes for a ½-hour special that would also feature the restoration of the Orpheum and its transformation into the Five Flags Theater. How could we turn that down? Rehearsals were stopped for a day as the Des Moines TV crew took over the theater. They interviewed Dorothy Gibbs, Charles Geroux, and me and recorded several tunes, including "Steamboat Comin'," "Pretty Fraulein," and "Can I Ever Be Me?" The full 18-piece orchestra was in the pit, and the production looked and sounded terrific.

The final rehearsal on July 20 was traumatic. Technical glitches were abundant. A live production of this type hadn't been mounted in the historic theater since the 1930s. Although the theaters fly space was modernized, we were working with a lot of old, borrowed lighting equipment. There were no wireless body microphones for sound enhancement, so the balance between orchestra and singers was critical. Regardless, the invited audience comprised of family and friends of cast members, and the press loved the show.

A post-dress rehearsal meeting with producer Dorothy Gibbs, Wayne Norman, Lauretta & Don Stribling, the new theater manager, Steve Peters, Tanya and Marina O'Rourke, and Charles Geroux was tense.

"The show runs long. We've got to tighten it up. And, the Tobacco Shop ballet has got to go," was the ultimate decision. Geroux resisted, but the majority ruled. He threw out pages of script, and I dumped pages of music.

On Opening night, July 22, 1976, the theater was near capacity, and everyone was ready to do their best. The Overture was awarded generous applause, as were the first few tunes. But the moment I will never forget came as we reached the last 16 bars of "Steamboat Comin." As the tempo slowed for a kick-line, a roar of cheers and applause rose from the audience, sending goosebumps up my spine and bringing tears to my eyes. There was no doubt. We had a hit.

A similar moment came as the kids completed "I Gotta Get Out & Get Away from Ioway." The audience loved the kids and the witty lyrics, which poked fun at Dubuque. The next day, I wrote additional lyrics for an encore.

A review in The Telegraph Herald based on the dress rehearsal was both critical and complimentary and confirmed that we had trimmed the length of the show. Our efforts were not in vain. A few weeks later a glowing review in the Des Moines Register brought in audiences from around the state. With "Get the Lead Out! Dubuque had entered a new era of live entertainment, and the theater at 4th & Main had once again become an essential part of the community's cultural scene. During the 22-performance month-long run, the Telegraph Herald says more than 11,000 saw the show.

During the final week, the cast and orchestra assembled on an off night to record an original cast album to preserve the memories. Each person involved received a free copy, and we sold another 1,000.

Within this folio are the principal songs from the score, along with photos from several scenes. It's important to mention the dedication of the all-volunteer cast who spent weeks of rehearsal, plus 20 live performances. Without them, this would have remained only words and music on paper.

I hope you enjoy the music and the memories of that unforgettable summer 50 years ago.

The Five Flags Executive Committee

and

The Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce

present

"GET THE LEAD OUT!"

FIVE FLAGS THEATRE
DUBUQUE, IOWA

JULY 22 - AUGUST 15, 1976

produced by
DOROTHY GIBBS

directed by
CHARLES L. GEROUX

musical direction and orchestration by
PAUL HEMMER

choreography by
TATIANA BECHENOVA O'ROURKE
MARINA O'ROURKE

costumes by
LAURETTA STRIBLING

settings by
DAVID BRUNE

lighting by
PATRICK HARRISON

make-up design by
ANNA HEINEMAN

assistant director and stage management
SIMON RAMIREZ

business and house management
DONALD STRIBLING

GET THE LEAD OUT

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The story takes place in Dubuque, Iowa, on three days in the spring of the mid-1850's

Act I

OVERTURE ..... **Orchestra**

Scene 1: MAIN STREET (Friday Morning)
"I Can't Believe It" ..... Joe Howard & Ensemble

Scene 2: THE THEATER, GRADUATION (The Same Morning)
"The School Song" ..... Kids

Scene 3: THE JONES STREET LEVEE (The Same Morning)
"Steamboat Comin'" ..... Ensemble
"The Rienza Can-Can" ..... Female Minstrels
"Did You See That" ..... Ensemble
"You Can't Cheat An Honest Man" ..... J. Clifton Purdue & Ludwig Miller

Scene 4: THE CITY HALL (Later That Afternoon)
"This Is America" ..... J. Clifton Purdue & Ensemble

Scene 5: MAIN STREET (Later That Afternoon)
"I'm Bored" ..... Gretchen Schmitt
"The Cincinnati Secret" ..... Mrs. Maude Adams

Scene 6: THE BACKYARDS, NORTHEND AND DUBLIC (That Evening)
"German Incidental" ..... Orchestra
"Irish Incidental" ..... Orchestra
"Can I Ever Be Me?" ..... Gretchen Schmitt & Cormac Maloney

Scene 7: SECOND STREET (Later That Evening)

Scene 8: MAIN STREET (Saturday Morning)
"Scene Change Incidental" ..... Orchestra
"Did You See That" (Reprise) ..... Literary Society & Women's Chorus
"The Cincinnati Secret Incidental" ..... Mrs. Maude Adams

Scene 9: THE BLUFFS (That Afternoon)
"Can I Ever Be Me?" (Reprise) ..... Cormac Maloney

Scene 10: A STREET NEAR THE LEVEE (Later That Afternoon)

Scene 11: MELODEON CONCERT HALL (That Evening)
"The Clog Dance" ..... Irish Men
"Irish Aire" ..... Irish Men

Scene 12: CULTURE CONCERT AT THE THEATRE (That Night)
"The Cincinnati Ballad" ..... Mrs. Maude Adams

Scene 13: THE CITY HALL (Later That Night)
"City Hall Scene Change" ..... Orchestra
"I Gotta Get Out and Get Away From Ioway" .... Ludwig Miller, Boys & Girls
"Ioway" (Encore) ..... Ludwig Miller, Boys & Girls

Scene 14: THE JONES STREET LEVEE (Later That Night)
"The Lazy Mississippi" ..... Cormac Maloney
"Get The Lead Out" (Flash Back Ballet) ..... Male Chorus & Ballet
"Act I Finale" ..... Orchestra

Act II

ENTR'ACT ..... **Orchestra**

Scene 1: MAIN STREET (Sunday Morning)
"Postin' n' Pastin'" ..... Joe Howard & Ensemble

Scene 2: CHURCH AT THE THEATRE (That Same Morning)
"Organ Incidental" ..... Orchestra
"The Cincinnati Ballad Incidental" ..... Mrs. Maude Adams

Scene 3: COULER AVENUE (That Afternoon)
"German Folk Song" ..... German Men
"Irish Aire" ..... Irish Men

Scene 4: THE TIVOLI BEER GARDENS (Later That Afternoon)
"Pretty Fraulein" ..... Ensemble

Scene 5: COULER AVENUE (Early That Evening)

Scene 6: ALL OVER TOWN (Till Early Monday Morning)
"Postin' n' Pastin'" (Reprise) ..... Joe Howard & Boys

Scene 7: STEWART'S TOBACCO SHOP (That Same Morning)
"Tobacco Shop Ballet" ..... Male Chorus

Scene 8: THE BLUFFS (That Afternoon)
"The Lazy Mississippi" (Reprise) ..... Madame Rienza, Mrs. Maude Adams & Gretchen Schmitt

Scene 9: PARLORS IN DUBUQUE (That Night)
"If You Can, I Can Go To The Can Can" ... Sean Maloney, Nora Maloney, Kurt Schmitt, Maria Schmitt, Ladies Literary Society, Irish Men

Scene 10: THE THEATRE (Later That Night)
"The Rienza Can-Can" ..... Orchestra
"The Dubuque Can Can" ..... Orchestra
"This Is America" (Reprise) ..... Ensemble
"Steamboat Comin" (Reprise) ..... Ensemble

CAST

JOE HOWARD, the bill poster ..... Dennis Meyer
GEORGE NIGHTENGALE, the mayor ..... James E. Ryan
SEAN MALONEY, Irish leader ..... Alan Diercks
NORA MALONEY, his wife ..... Diane Repass
CORMAC MALONEY, their son ..... Chris Ludescher
REVEREND ALLEN CURR, the Minister ..... Paul Rucker
KURT SCHMITT, German leader ..... Jim E. Brady
MARIA SCHMITT, his wife ..... Maribeth Vogel
GRETCHEN SCHMITT, their daughter ..... Martha J. Wadle
J. CLIFTON PURDUE, a merchant ..... Joe Schuver
LUDWIG MILLER, an orphan boy ..... Steve Abolt
JUSTICE CHAPLINE, the Marshall ..... LaVerne Ney
MRS. MAUDE ADAMS of the Literary Society ..... Mary Beth Richardson
MADAME RIENZA, directress of the Female Minstrels ..... Mary Tierney Johnson

THE LADIES LITERARY SOCIETY ..... Nancy Meis, Ardyth Weinbender, Terese Cummings

THE SCHOOL GANG ..... Tim Ryan, Tom Nankival, Archie Allen, Betzy Miller

THE SCHOOL GIRLS ..... Theresa Hentges, Julie Gold, Mary Jo Ragatz, Mary Bushman, Cheryl Quirk, Ann Kunnert, Laura Nelson

THE FEMALE MINSTRELS ..... Julie A. Kretz, Beth Wagner, Ellen O'Brien, Kathy Higgins

THE IRISH MEN ..... Bill Daughtery, Roy Meyer, Bernard Dansart, Joe Hickey, Dave Tigges

THE IRISH WOMEN ..... Claudia Rumery, Carol Hallenback, Evie Green, Carol Spahn, Rose Onufrak

THE GERMAN MEN ..... Alan Wernke, Perry Araeipour, Buddy Jaeger, Steve Fravel

THE GERMAN WOMEN ..... Donna Burhorn, Kathy Tierney, Cathy Wiederaenders, Leanne Sievers

SPECIALTY DANCERS ..... Jeff Schroeder
D. Barak Stribling

CAPTAIN of the Northern Bell ..... Dave Tigges
BAR KEEPER, Melodeon Saloon ..... Steve Fravel
MR. STEWART, Tobacco Shop Owner ..... Buddy Jaeger
MR. FINNEY, beleaguered husband ..... Bernard Dansart
MR. AMBERG, beleaguered husband ..... Dave Tigges
WRETCHED WOMAN ..... Rose Onufrak
WRETCHED DAUGHTER ..... Theresa Hentges
WAITER at the Beer Garden ..... Perry Araeipour
MESSENGER at the Beer Garden ..... Tom Nankival

DANCERS ..... Dennis Meyer, Tim Ryan, Dave Tigges, Buddy Jaeger, Jeff Schroeder, D. Barak Stribling, Beth Wagner, Kathy Higgins, Julie A. Kretz, Ellen O'Brien, Ann Kunnert, Laura Nelson, Cheryl Quirk

ORCHESTRA

STRINGS	John Tigges, Bob LaRue, Maria Ottavi, Barbara Pykulyk, Lydia Lucas, Tim Tigges, Mike Miller, Mike Maggio
BRASS	Jim Kelly, Jeff Laws, Paul Powers, Tom Richards
REEDS	Roger Svoboda, Gary Massey, Ronnie Pline, Melodie Kipp, Mary Mortenson
PERCUSSION	Keith Marugg
PIANO	Terry Dillon
REHEARSAL PIANIST	Marshal Hovel
ORCHESTRA MANAGER	John Tigges
ASSISTANT MUSIC COPYIST	Donna Burhorn

STAFF

SET CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION	Lyn Mangrich, Jim Ryan
SCENE PAINTING SUPERVISOR	Cheri Kraske
BOX OFFICE SUPERVISOR/PUBLIC RELATIONS ASS'T	Libby Schmidt
PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHER	Don Kistler
HAIR STYLING	Patty Zugenbuehier, Anna Heineman
ASS'T HOUSE MANAGER/USHER SUPERVISOR	Rob Tully
HEAD USHERS	John Goodman, Jean Schlueter
POSTER DESIGN	Simon Ramirez
SCRIPT TYPIST	Joyce Bond

STAGE CREW

ASS'T STAGE MANAGER	Dawn Miller
HEAD GRIP	Tom Kean
ASS'T GRIP	Carol Maiers
PROP MISTRESS	Libby Schmidt
PROP ASSISTANTS	Betzy Miller, Mary Bushman
CREW	Chris Zmudka, Kathy Luksetich, Sandy Reynolds
SET CONSTRUCTION	Judy Christman, Eva Laford, Stephen Miller, Stacy Herrig, Gina Herrig, Nick Herrig, Linette Cox, Pam Rose, Jeanne Kass, Teri Badish, Theresa Heim, Melanie Wenzel, Carol Maiers, Terry Wolter, Tom Kean, David Koenig, Steve Thomas, Barak Stribling, Roy Meyer, Tim Ryan, Steve Abolt, Marsha Hovel, Dave Tigges, Buddy Jaeger, Archie Allen, Jeff Schroeder, Carol Buhman, Donna Buhman, Drew Stevens, Tori Goodman
SCENE PAINTERS	Cheri Kraske, Shirley Johannsen, Donna Lavacek, Elizabeth Reed, Gina Herrig, Stacy Herrig, Nick Herrig, Sue Clemen, Jean Kass, Glenda Pacholke, Carol Buhman, Jill Johannsen, Eric Johannsen, Tim Ryan, Jim Ryan
LIGHTS	Pat Harrison, Don Kistler, Jeff Avenarius, Tina McCoy
MAKE-UP CREW	Fran Hedeman, Mary Beth Tauke, Barak Stribling, Buddy Jaeger
COSTUME CREW	Lois Matthews, Barak Stribling, Nita Wiederaenders, Fran Hedeman, Sue Strickland, Kathy Law, Kenlynn Welch, Carol Welch, Marianne Miller, Cathy Wiederaenders, Pat Neuhaus, Linette Cox, Buddy Jaeger, Rose Onufrak
PROGRAM LAYOUT	Clifford Gold, Lissa Lunning, Marilyn Kempthorne, Ellen Von Ah, Steve Weldin, Pat Weber, Don Stribling, Dorothy Gibbs, Robert Cronin, Julie Gold, Janet Sanderson
PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION	Linda DeGree, Linda Behr, Laurie Schoenauer, Linda Roth, Andrea Scharnau, Mike Herbst, Mark Herbst, Tom Carroll, Cathy Sandman, Dave Sanders, Kay Norman, Jean Fyten, Stephanie Miller, Linda Weber, Rhonda Kronfeldt
USHERS	Welcome Wagon members, Jan Hemmer, Kathy Law
BOX OFFICE	Lisa Silverberg, Tori Goodman, Cindy Freisinger
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Rosheks Display Department, Loras Players, University of Dubuque, Clarke College Drama Department, Aladdin Magiclean, Les Carousel, Mrs. Howard Ruff, Veronica Rowell, Mrs. E. S. Travis, Mrs. E. Staudacher, Joyce Bond, Edie Norman, Mary Alice Carroll, Tania O'Rourke, Paul Hemmer, Mrs. J. C. Quigley, Carol Spahr, Evie Green, Miss Alice Willmers, Stella Willman, Elizabeth Burden, Adams Realty, Telegraph-Herald, Inc., Steve Peters, Shot Tower Inn, Voggenthaler's, Mould Studio, Reporting Services, WDBQ, KIWI, KDTH, Mr. Dave Fyten, Teleprompter, Channel 10, Ms. Susan Buske, WMT, Mr. Barry Norris, Mr. Bill Jones, Interstate Power Company, Frank Hardie Advertising.

Paul Hemmer and Charles Geroux

Marina O’Rourke, Tanya Bechenova O’Rourke & Geroux

Get the Lead Out! Orchestra in rehearsal

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Principal cast members Jim Brady, Alan Diercks Martha Wadle, Chris Ludescher and Joe Schuver

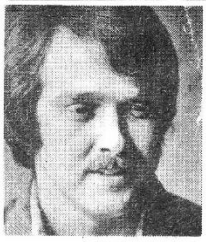
Chris Ludescher, Martha Wadle, Steve Abolt

“Pretty Fraulein” set

“I Gotta Get Our and Get Away from I-O-WAY”

“Steamboat Comin’ “

gallery/ **david fyten**



Play debuts, gets revisions and applause

"Get the Lead Out," Dubuque's much-ballyhooed bicentennial musical, finally has made its debut after a harrowing week of last-minute — and strongly called for — revisions.

The original comedy, which chronicles Dubuque's early years through three days in the mid-1850s, opened last night and runs through Aug. 15 at the Five Flags Theater.

Tickets for performances, which are at 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and 2 p.m. Saturdays, can be purchased at the Five Flags box office from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Mondays or by phone at 556-6997.

The show was painfully uneven as of Tuesday night, when members of the media and friends and family of the cast and staff were treated to a preview performance. At times, it crackled with electrifying moments; at others, it groaned with conspicuous flaws.

The bright constants were Paul Hemmer's magnificent musical score, dazzling period costumes by Lauretta Stribling and Anna Heineman and well-conceived and crisply-executed choreography by Tanya and Marina O'Rourke.

Hemmer's compositions deserve special applause. His Broadway-class score is a triumph, rich with delightful orchestral melodies, memorable songs like "Steamboat Comin' " and "Can I Ever Be Me?" and snappy show tunes like "Did You See That?" "Postin' and Pastin' " and "If You Can, I Can Go to the Cancan."

But Charles Geroux's script, while constructed around clever and plausible plot lines, was ponderous. The dialogue was verbose and repetitive, and some scenes seemed drastically overwritten or completely superfluous. Act One especially was tedious, dragging on for almost two hours.

Geroux and other staff members, recognizing the show's faults as a normal function of any new play never before performed, whittled the script Wednesday.

"There's no question that the show gets started and ends," Geroux said Wednesday night. "The trick is to get the two as close together as possible."

"It's really a fickle thing," he continued. "You think you're really sure something will affect everyone in the audience, and then something entirely different happens when it gets on stage."

Trimmed were an expendable tobacco shop scene; parts of wordy City Hall, culture concert and church scenes; and some song reprises, most notably, Mrs. Adams' "The Cincinnati Secret," which by Act Two had begun to sound like a litany.

The staff also simplified the technical end of the show in an effort to shore up sloppy, interminable scene changes that were evident Tuesday night because of a lack of rehearsal time by the stage crew.

The 53-member amateur cast is remarkably strong, especially vibrant in the ensemble scenes. But Tuesday night, a few of the principal characters projected their voices weakly, and some of the solo numbers and dialogue were lost. And the overall pace of the show would be stepped up if the cast picked up its cues quicker.

However, by last night's opening performance, most of the wrinkles had been ironed out, and the audience gave "Get the Lead Out" a standing ovation.

BICENTENNIAL MUSICAL

"GET THE LEAD OUT!"

Five Flags Theatre

• • • 20 PERFORMANCES • • •
July 22nd — August 15th

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'Brass and brightness' liven Dubuque's Bicentennial musical

By JOAN BUNKE
Register critic-at-large

DUBUQUE, IA. — Dubuque's nervy gamble on its very own bicentennial musical paid off handsomely with the opening Thursday night of Paul Hemmer's and Charles Geroux's "Get the Lead Out!" in Five Flags Theater.

The lively show, which has more than enough brass, brightness and entertainment pizzazz to overcome the drawbacks of a complicated book and an overlong first act, runs through Aug. 15, for a total of 20 performances.

Set in the lead-mining days of the 1850s, "Get the Lead Out!" involves a threatened land grab, a riverboat swindler, an Irish-German feud, a Romeo and Juliet subplot, and a "window lady" hunting her runaway husband.

Familiar forms, local themes

Its music works delightfully because of Hemmer's gift for taking familiar musical forms, working local themes into them and making the tunes sound fresh and original. His professional-caliber score, played with brisk competence by a 17-member orchestra conducted by Hemmer himself, ranges across the entire American-musical spectrum — and then some.

Hemmer has crammed ballads, a can-can, a "This Is America" march, an Irish clog dance, a pretty German landler, and more into his score. His big number is one of those soul-searching ballads for young lovers, called "Can I Ever Be Me?" It echoes Broadway formula, but has a memorable individuality of its own.

Director Geroux, who based his book on extensive research into Dubuque's theater past, moves the action along speedily, but his first act suffers from being an hour and 40 minutes long, as well as from a couple of sharp shifts that jar the rhythm of the story's development.

There's probably one number too many in the first of the two acts — and it may be Hemmer's title song. The "Get the Lead Out!" blues number, which finally explains the big feud, shifts the tone from familiar musical to blowsy cabaret.

It's accompanied by a "flashback ballet" along the dramatic line of "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" and the funky contrast with the fresh, wide-open music that has gone before is too much for the number to overcome.

Geroux's second act is fun — partly because all of the exposition is out of the way, partly because it's only 45 minutes long and its pace is stepped up.

Actors move well

Geroux's singing actors move well. He has managed to make his huge cast of 53 non-professionals work through a complicated show with competence.

Since the actors are non-professionals, some of them are more often on the surface of a role than within it. A few more performances may see some of them work deeper into their characters and acquire more assurance, and a bit more volume, in their singing.

The choreography is by Tatiana Bechenova O'Rourke and her daughter, Marina O'Rourke; it adds fresh, humorous touches to the proceedings.

Among standouts in the cast are Steve Abolt, who exhibits ingratiating charm as the rascally orphan boy, and Martha J. Wadle as the Juliet. Chris Ludescher as the Romeo, James E. Ryan as the mayor and Mary Beth Richardson as the "widow lady" and Literary Society light.

Joe Schuver's villainous J. Clifton Purdue could be slicker and nastier, and both Jim E. Brady as the German leader and Alan Diercks as the Irishman could add a bit more of the "ethnic" to their portrayals.

Singular accomplishment

Despite its flaws, "Get the Lead Out!" is a singular accomplishment for its composer, Hemmer, who is a WDBQ radio personality when he isn't composing or studying music; for director and writer Geroux, who is chairman of the performing arts department of the Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield, Mich. and a former Clarke College professor here, and for producer Dorothy Gibbs, who teaches language arts at Dubuque's Washington Junior High School.

Producer Gibbs calls the 20-performance show an exciting demonstration of how business and the arts can work together. It is that.

The Five Flags Executive Committee, which has spurred the revival of downtown Dubuque by restoring Five Flags Theater, and the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce provided the seed money, about $8,000, to launch "Get the Lead Out!"

The $30,000 show has involved a "tremendous commitment" of community time, services and money, Gibbs said, and the product bears that out. The community has come up with a commendable piece of theater — which may point the way for more of the same.

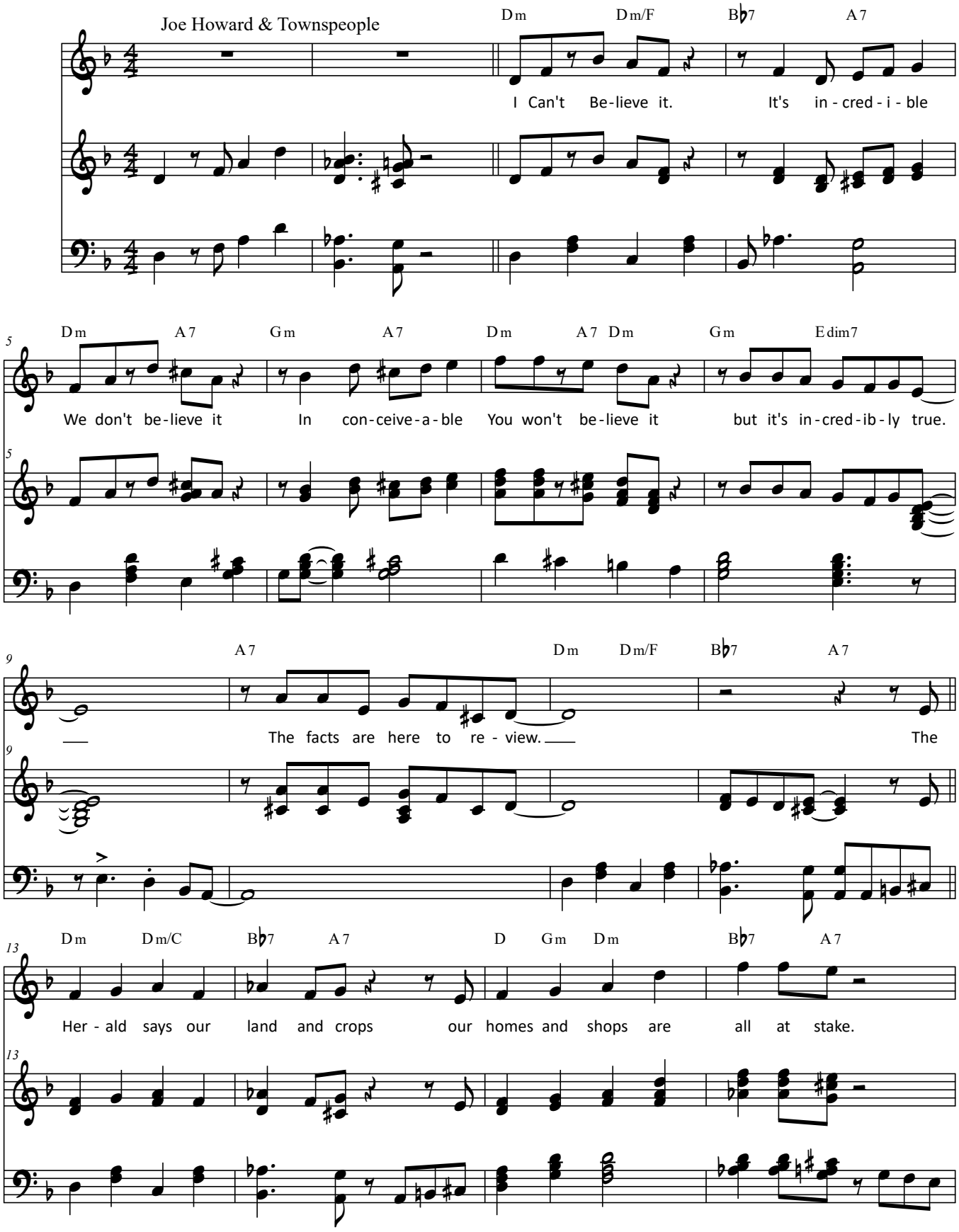
Performances are scheduled at 8 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturdays, through Aug. 15. Ticket information is available from Five Flags Theater, Fourth and Main streets, Dubuque, Ia. 52001, or by telephoning (319) 556-6997. Tickets range from $2.50 balcony seats to $6.50 box seats.

Local businessman Robert Kehm of Robert's Smorgastable has worked out a package mini-tour of Dubuque that includes a theater ticket, one night's stay at the Julien Motor Inn, dinner at his smorgastable, a boat ride on the Mississippi, and a guided tour of nearby Galena, Ill. Rates vary and participants provide their own transportation. Information is available at (319) 583-5379.

I Can't Believe it!

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Act 1 Scene1
Main Street

Music and Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Joe Howard & Townspeople
Dm Dm/F B♭7 A7
I Can't Be-lieve it. It's in - cred - i - ble
5
Dm A7 Gm A7 Dm A7 Dm Gm Edim7
We don't be-lieve it In con-ceive-a-ble You won't be-lieve it but it's in-cred-ib-ly true.
9
A7 Dm Dm/F B♭7 A7
The facts are here to re - view. The
13
Dm Dm/C B♭7 A7 D Gm Dm B♭7 A7
Her - ald says our land and crops our homes and shops are all at stake.

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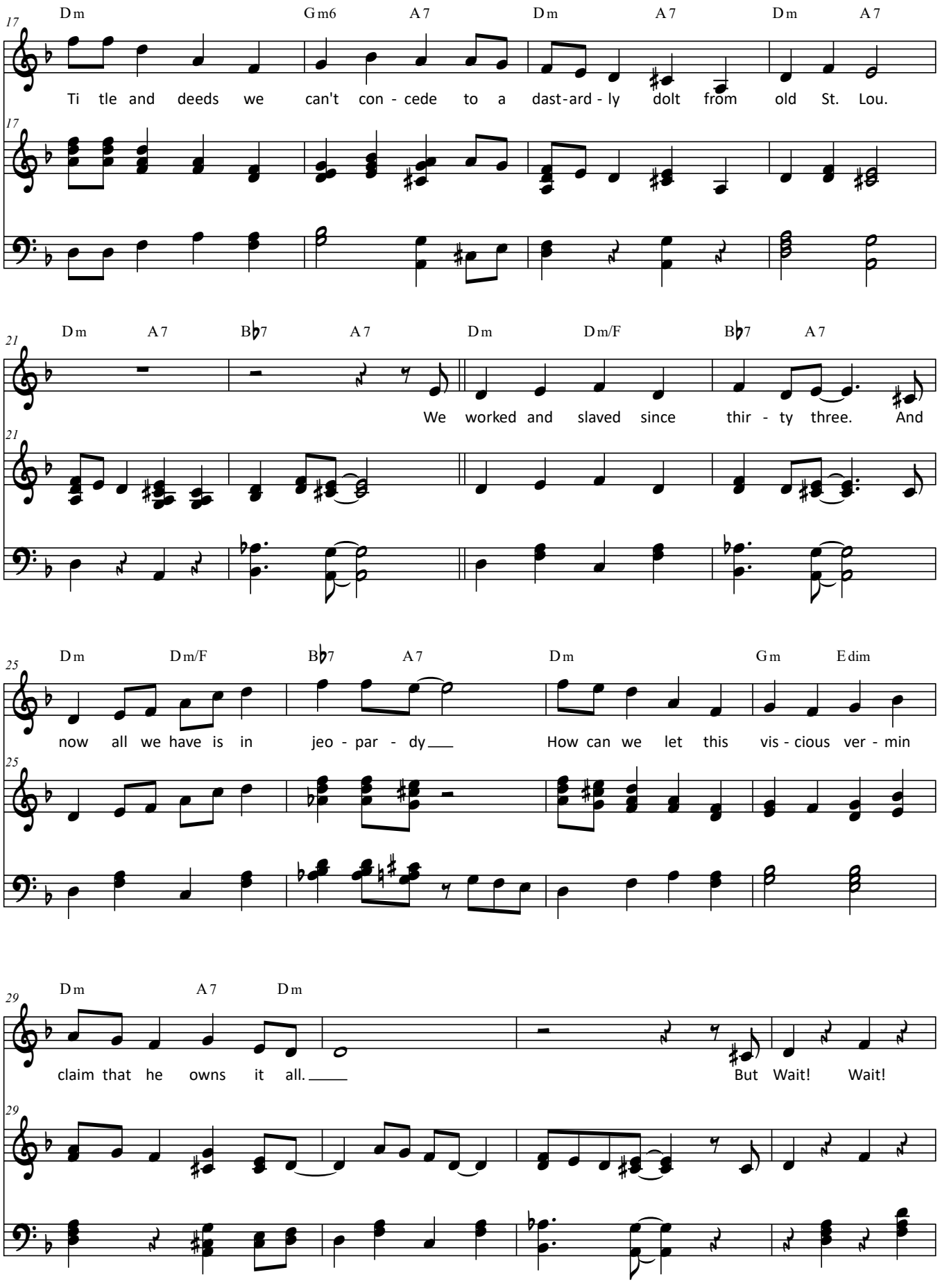
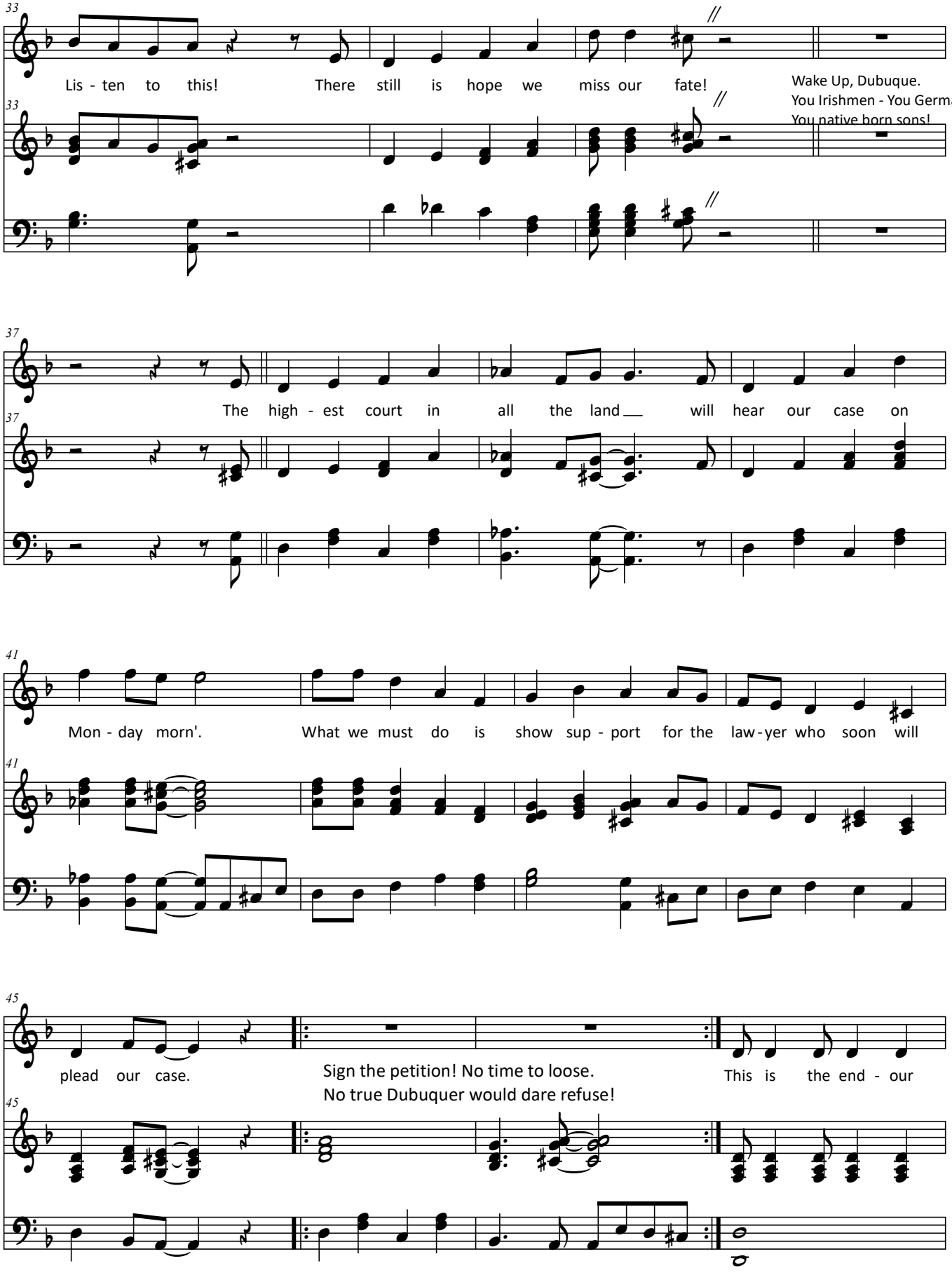
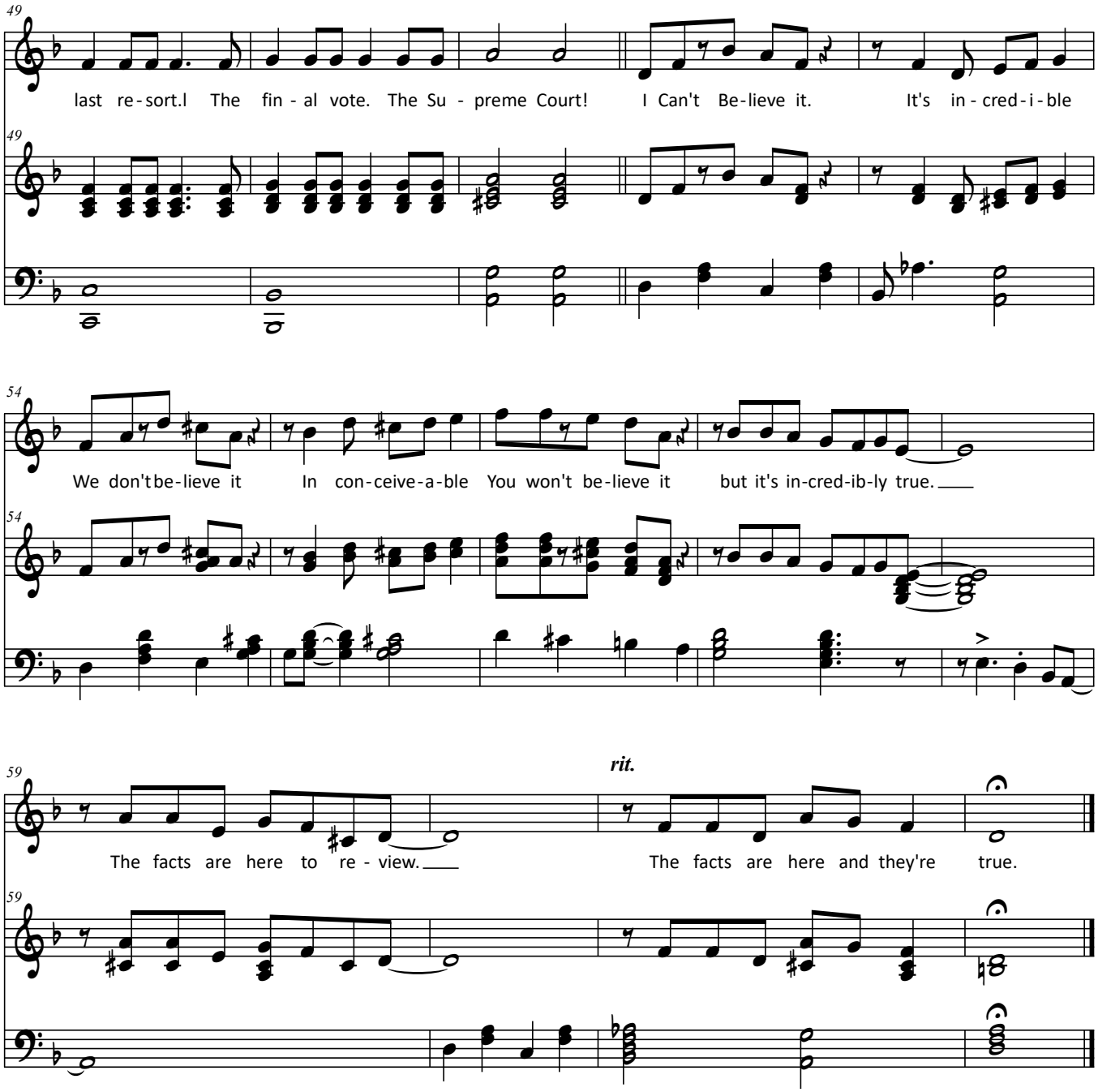
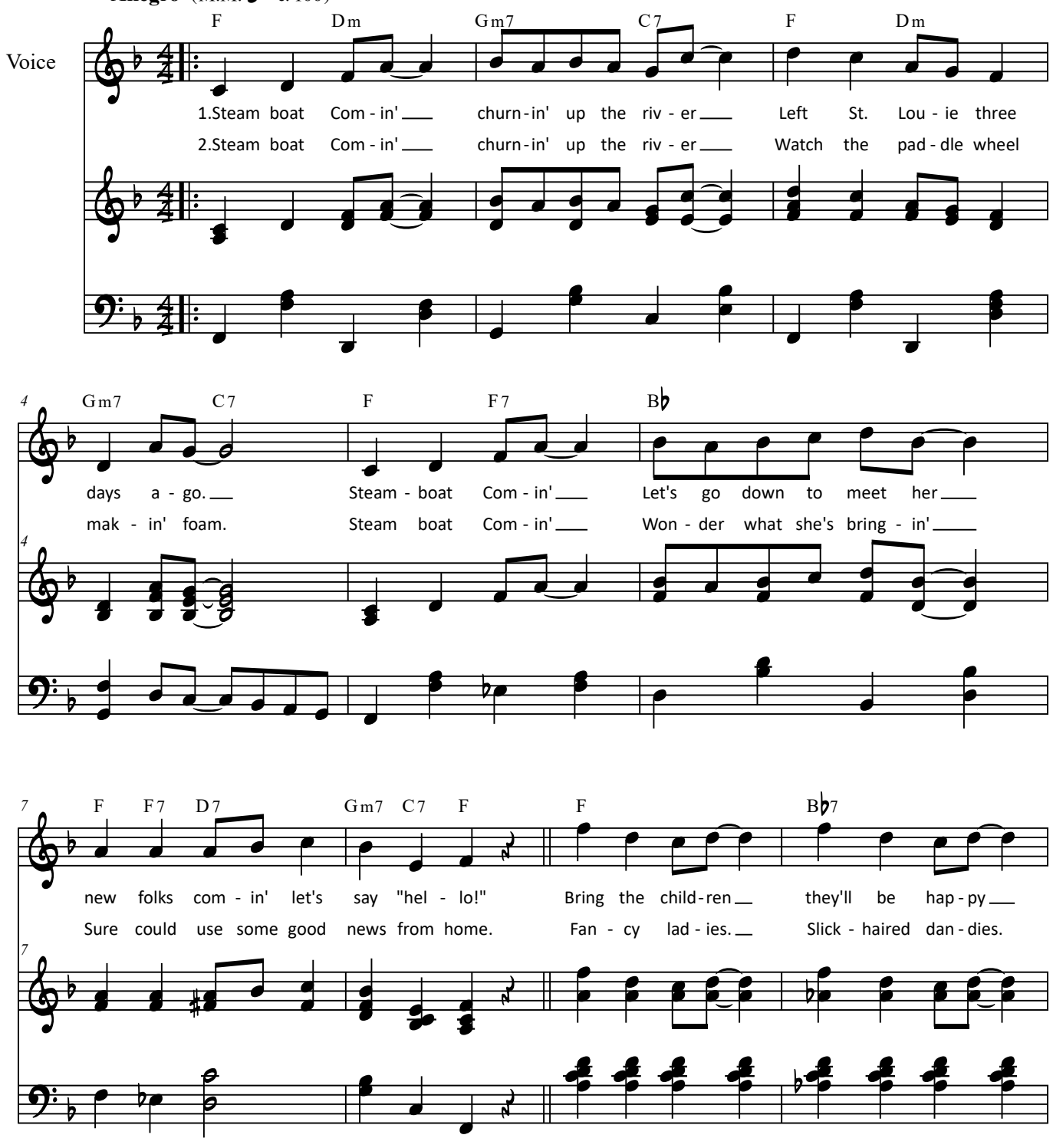

17
Dm Gm6 A7 Dm A7 Dm A7
Ti tle and deeds we can't con - cede to a dast-ard - ly dolt from old St. Lou.
21
Dm A7 B♭7 A7 Dm Dm/F B♭7 A7
We worked and slaved since thir - ty three. And
25
Dm Dm/F B♭7 A7 Dm Gm Edim
now all we have is in jeo - par - dy How can we let this vis - cious ver - min
29
Dm A7 Dm
claim that he owns it all. But Wait! Wait!

33
Lis - ten to this! There still is hope we miss our fate!
Wake Up, Dubuque.
You Irishmen - You Germans
You native born sons!
37
The high - est court in all the land will hear our case on
41
Mon - day morn'. What we must do is show sup - port for the law - yer who soon will
45
plead our case.
Sign the petition! No time to loose.
No true Dubuquer would dare refuse!
This is the end - our

49
last re-sort.I The fin - al vote. The Su - preme Court! I Can't Be-lieve it. It's in - cred - i - ble
54
We don't be-lieve it In con-ceive-a-ble You won't be-lieve it but it's in-cred-ib-ly true.
59
rit.
The facts are here to re - view.
The facts are here and they're true.

Steamboat Comin'

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music and Lyrcs by Paul Hemmer

Act 1 - Scene 3
Jones St. Levi

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 160)
Voice
F Dm Gm7 C7 F Dm
1.Steam boat Com - in' churn - in' up the riv - er Left St. Lou - ie three
2.Steam boat Com - in' churn - in' up the riv - er Watch the pad - dle wheel
4
Gm7 C7 F F7 B♭
days a - go. Steam - boat Com - in' Let's go down to meet her
mak - in' foam. Steam boat Com - in' Won - der what she's bring - in'
7
F F7 D7 Gm7 C7 F F B♭7
new folks com - in' let's say "hel - lo!" Bring the child - ren they'll be hap - py
Sure could use some good news from home. Fan - cy lad - ies. Slick - haired dan - dies.

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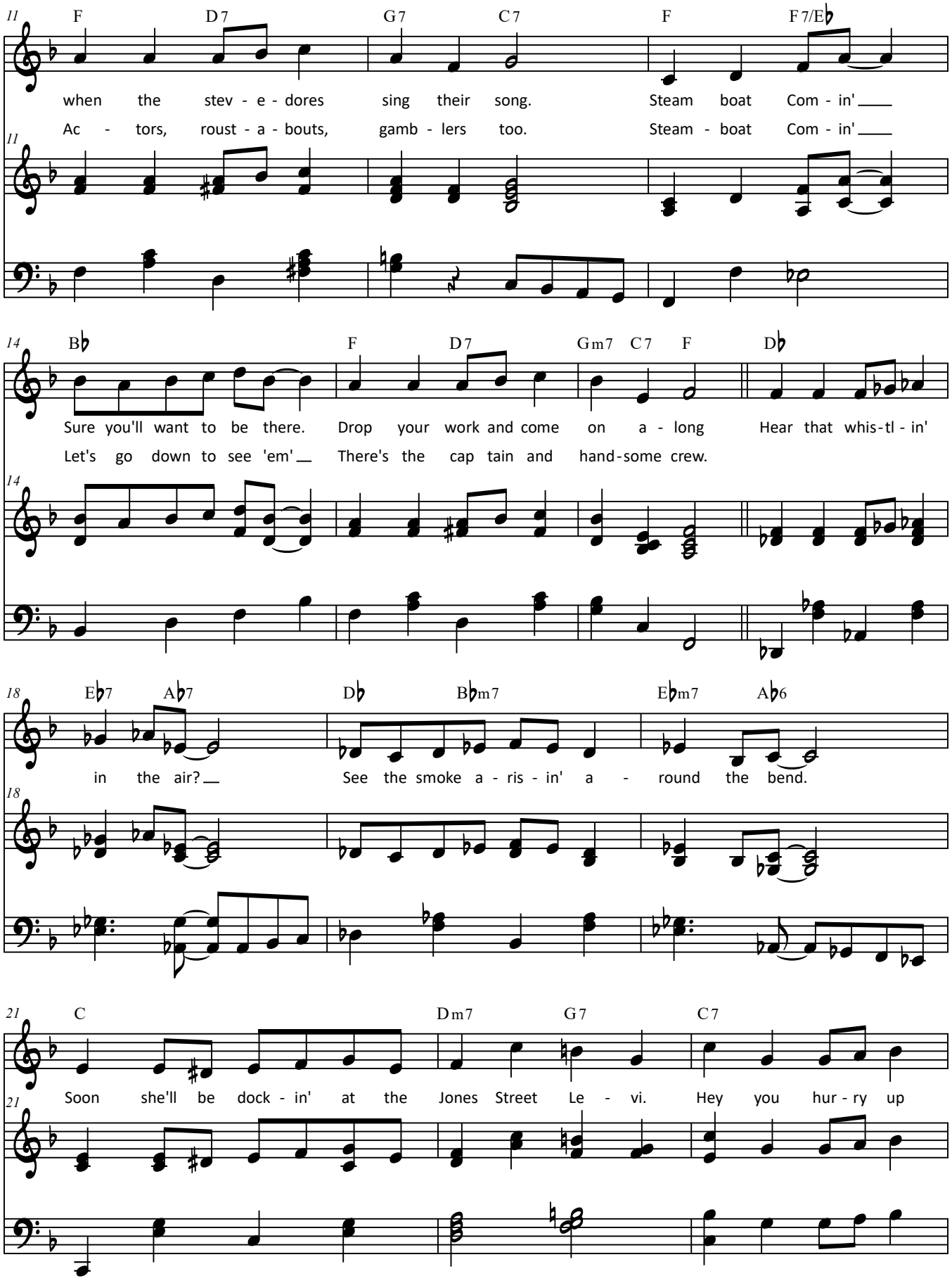
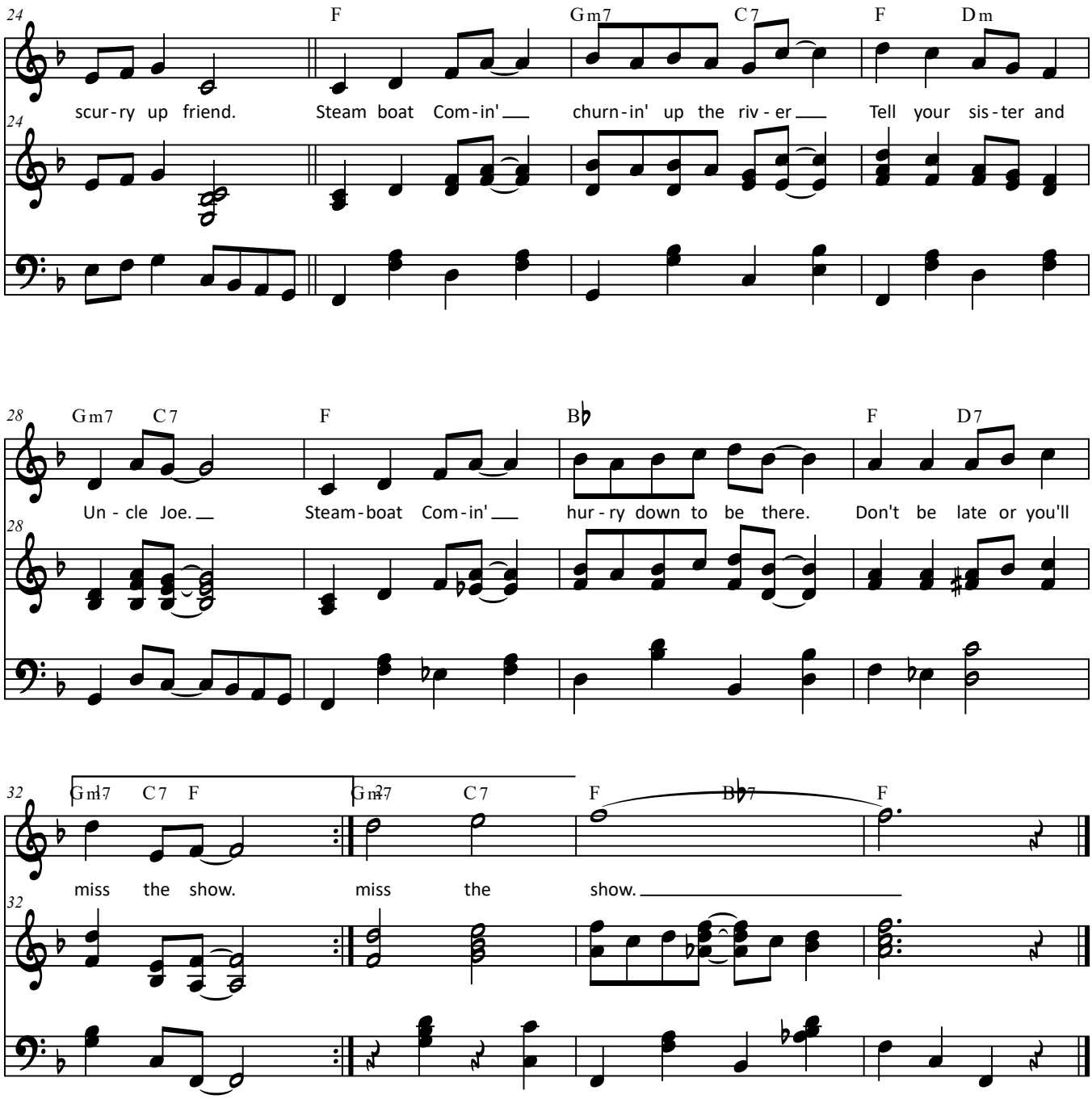
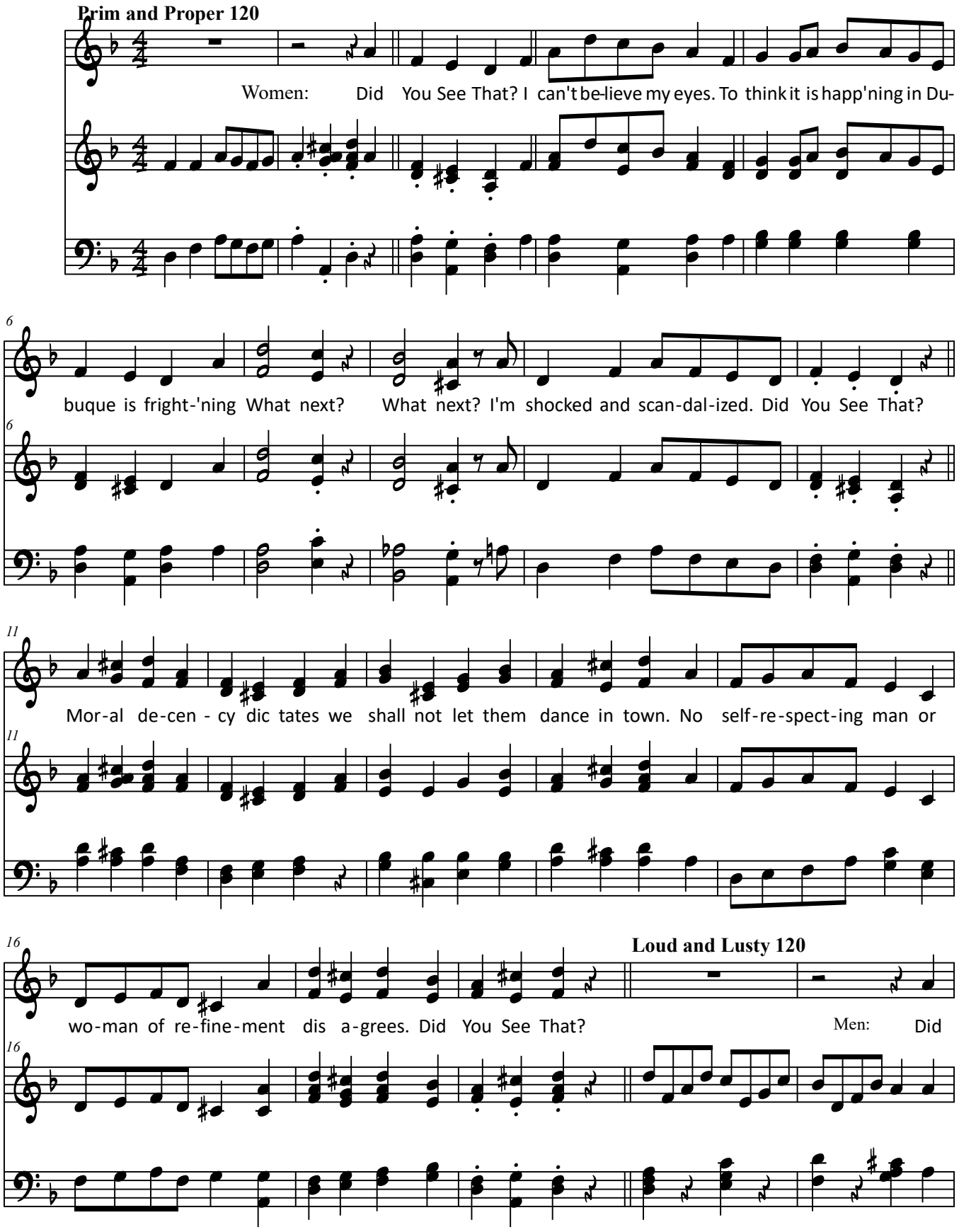

11
F D7 G7 C7 F F7/E♭
when the stev - e - dores sing their song. Steam boat Com - in'
Ac - tors, roust - a - bouts, gamb - lers too. Steam - boat Com - in'
14
B♭ F D7 Gm7 C7 F D♭
Sure you'll want to be there. Drop your work and come on a - long Hear that whis-tl - in'
Let's go down to see 'em' There's the cap tain and hand-some crew.
18
E♭7 A♭7 D♭ B♭m7 E♭m7 A♭6
in the air? See the smoke a - ris - in' a - round the bend.
21
C Dm7 G7 C7
Soon she'll be dock - in' at the Jones Street Le - vi. Hey you hur - ry up

24
F
Gm7
C7
F
Dm
scur-ry up friend.
Steam boat Com-in'
churn-in' up the riv-er
Tell your sis-ter and
28
Gm7
C7
F
B♭
F
D7
Un-cle Joe.
Steam-boat Com-in'
hur-ry down to be there.
Don't be late or you'll
32
Gm7
C7
F
Gm7
C7
F
B♭7
F
miss the show.
miss the
show.

Did You See That?

Townspeople react
to the Can-Can Dancers

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Prim and Proper 120
Women: Did You See That? I can't be-lieve my eyes. To think it is happ'ning in Du-
buque is fright-'ning What next? What next? I'm shocked and scan-dal-ized. Did You See That?
Mor-al de-cen - cy dic tates we shall not let them dance in town. No self-re-spect-ing man or
Loud and Lusty 120
wo-man of re-fine-ment dis a-grees. Did You See That?
Men: Did

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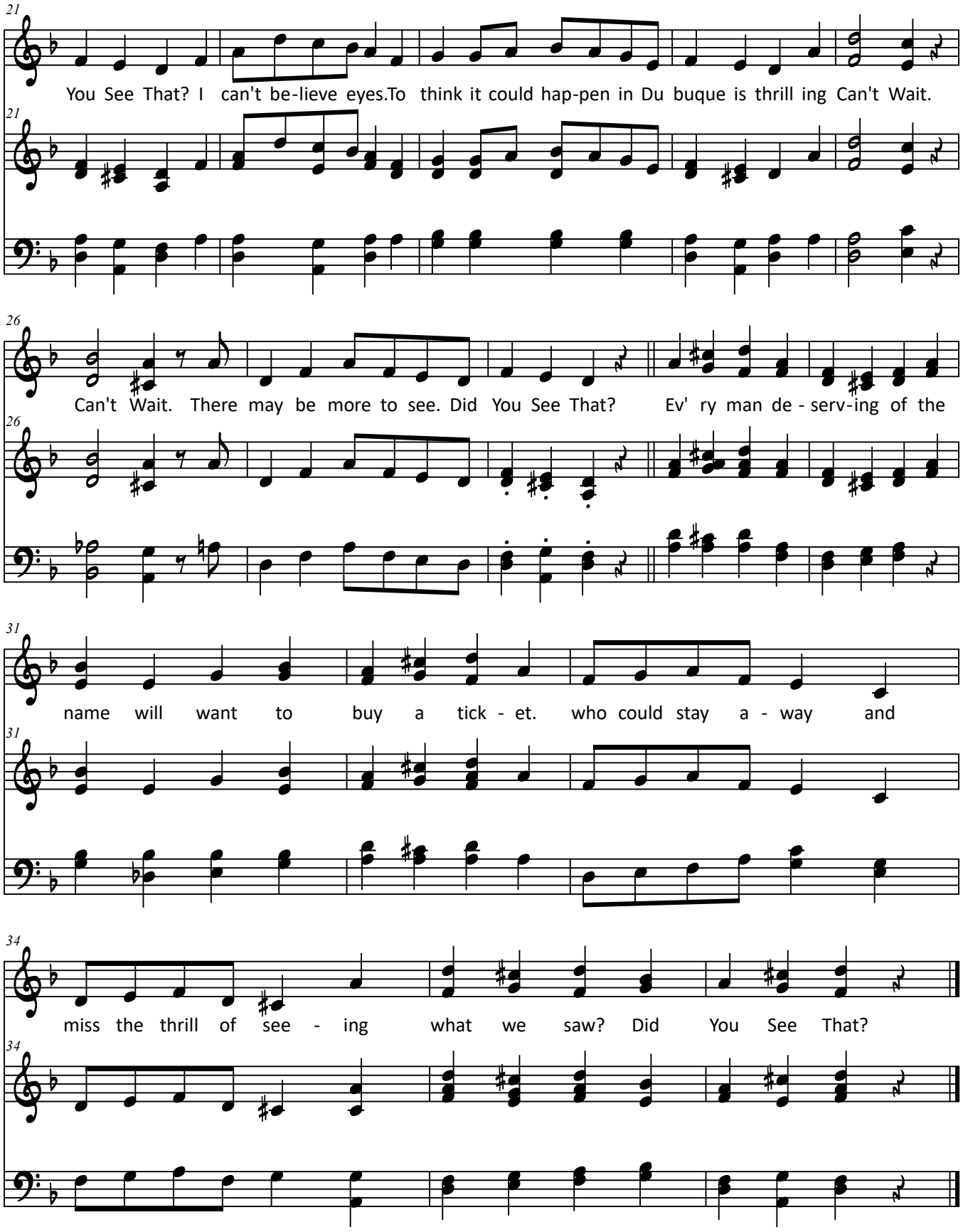
21
You See That? I can't be-lieve eyes.To think it could hap-pen in Du buque is thrill ing Can't Wait.
26
Can't Wait. There may be more to see. Did You See That? Ev' ry man de - serv-ing of the
31
name will want to buy a tick - et. who could stay a - way and
34
miss the thrill of see - ing what we saw? Did You See That?

Vocal-Piano

You Can't Cheat an Honest Man

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Allegro

Voice

Cm B♭7 A♭7 G7

5 Cm G7 Cm

Lis ten boy, if you want to learn a trick or two

11 G7 Cm **to Coda** A♭7

Here's a fact that I can tell you true You Can't Cheat an

16 A♭7 G7 Cm B♭7 A♭7 G7 Cm

Hon - est Man. Ev' ry

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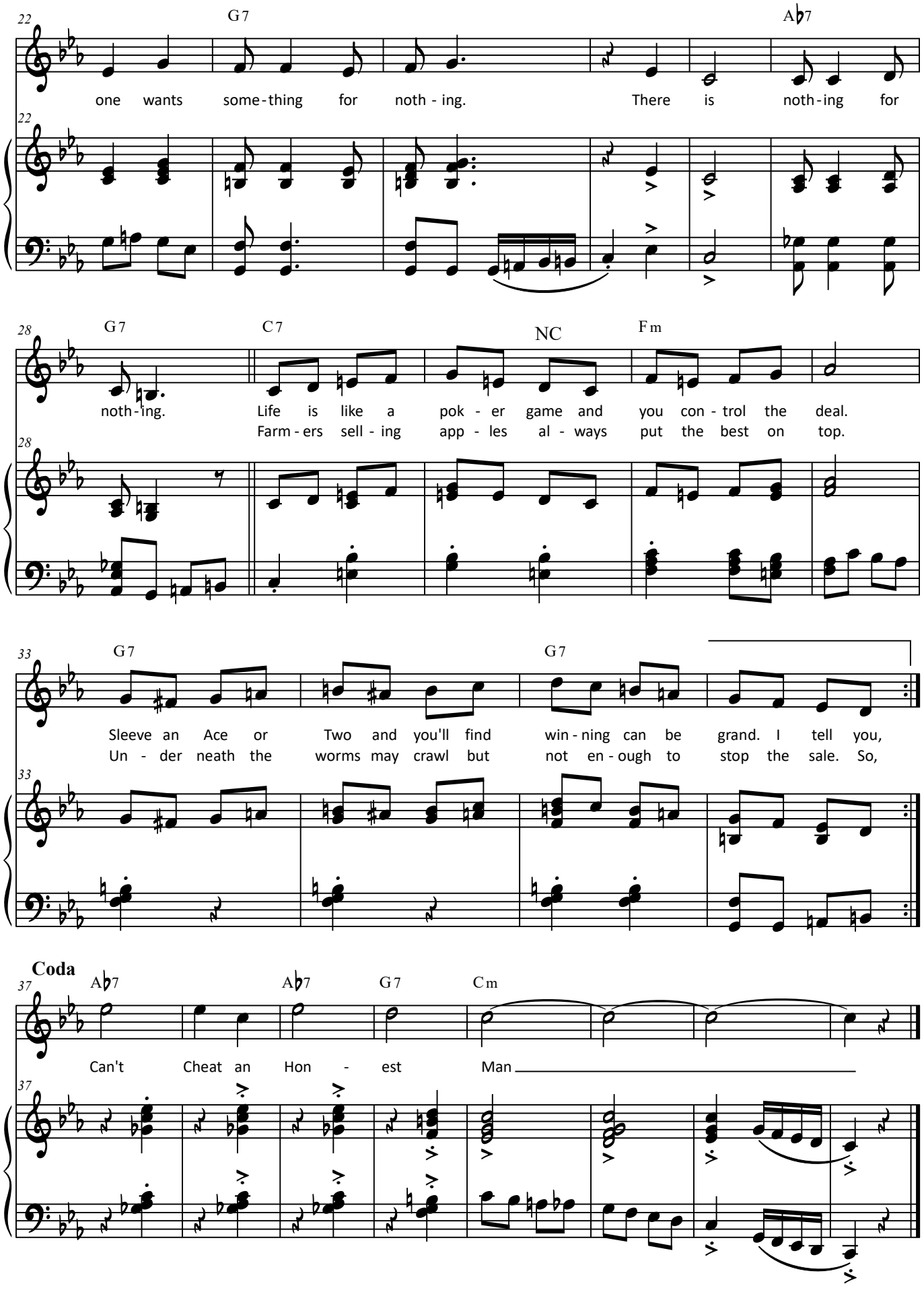
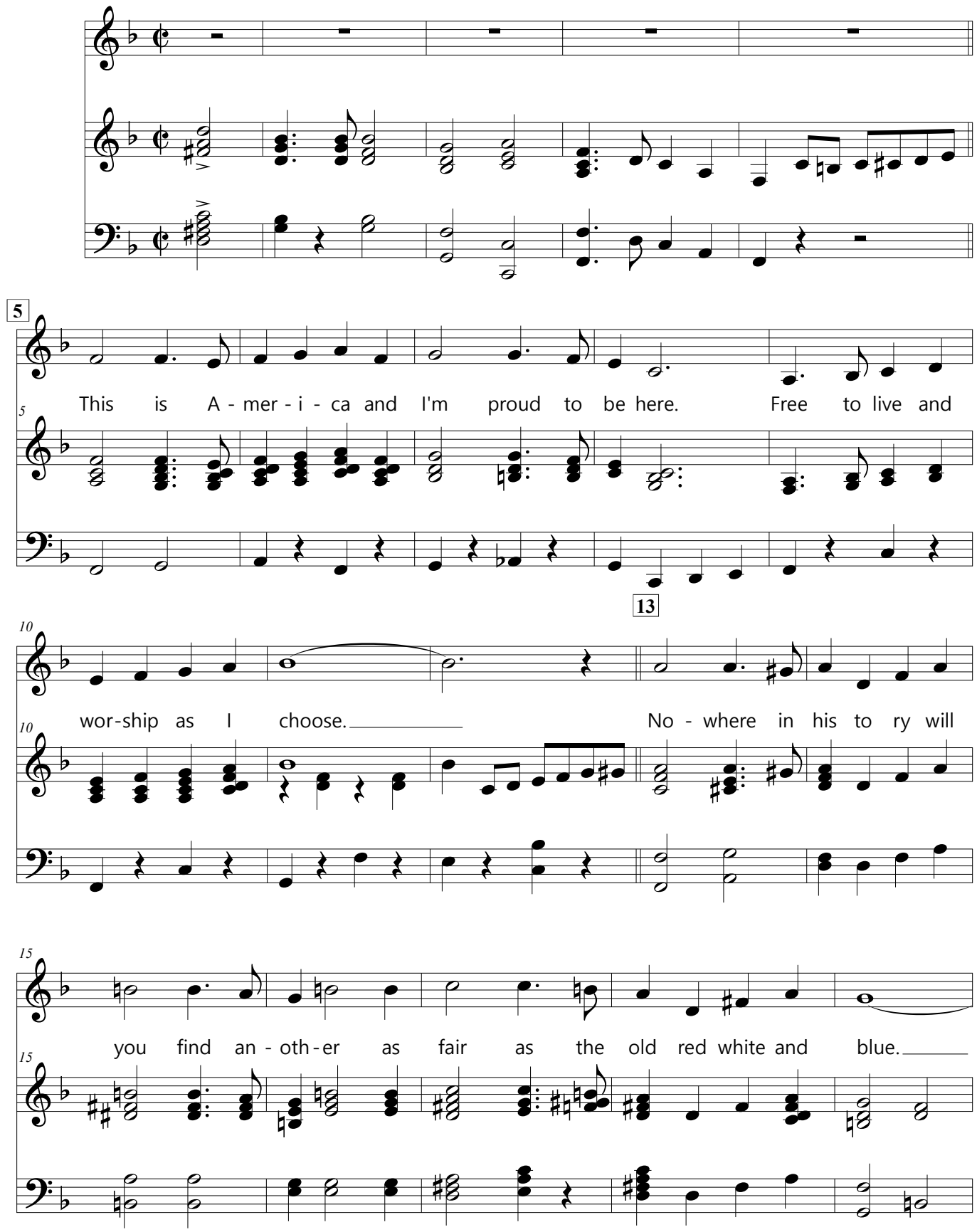

22
G7
A♭7
one wants some-thing for noth - ing. There is noth-ing for
28
G7
C7
NC
Fm
noth-ing. Life is like a pok - er game and you con - trol the deal.
Farm - ers sell - ing app - les al - ways put the best on top.
33
G7
G7
Sleeve an Ace or Two and you'll find win - ning can be grand. I tell you,
Un - der neath the worms may crawl but not en - ough to stop the sale. So,
Coda
37
A♭7
A♭7
G7
Cm
Can't Cheat an Hon - est Man

THIS IS AMERICA

(from "Get the Lead Out!")
Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Act 1 - Scene 4
City Hall

Patriotic March (♩ = c. 120)

5
This is A - mer - i - ca and I'm proud to be here. Free to live and
13
wor-ship as I choose. No - where in his to ry will
you find an - oth-er as fair as the old red white and blue.

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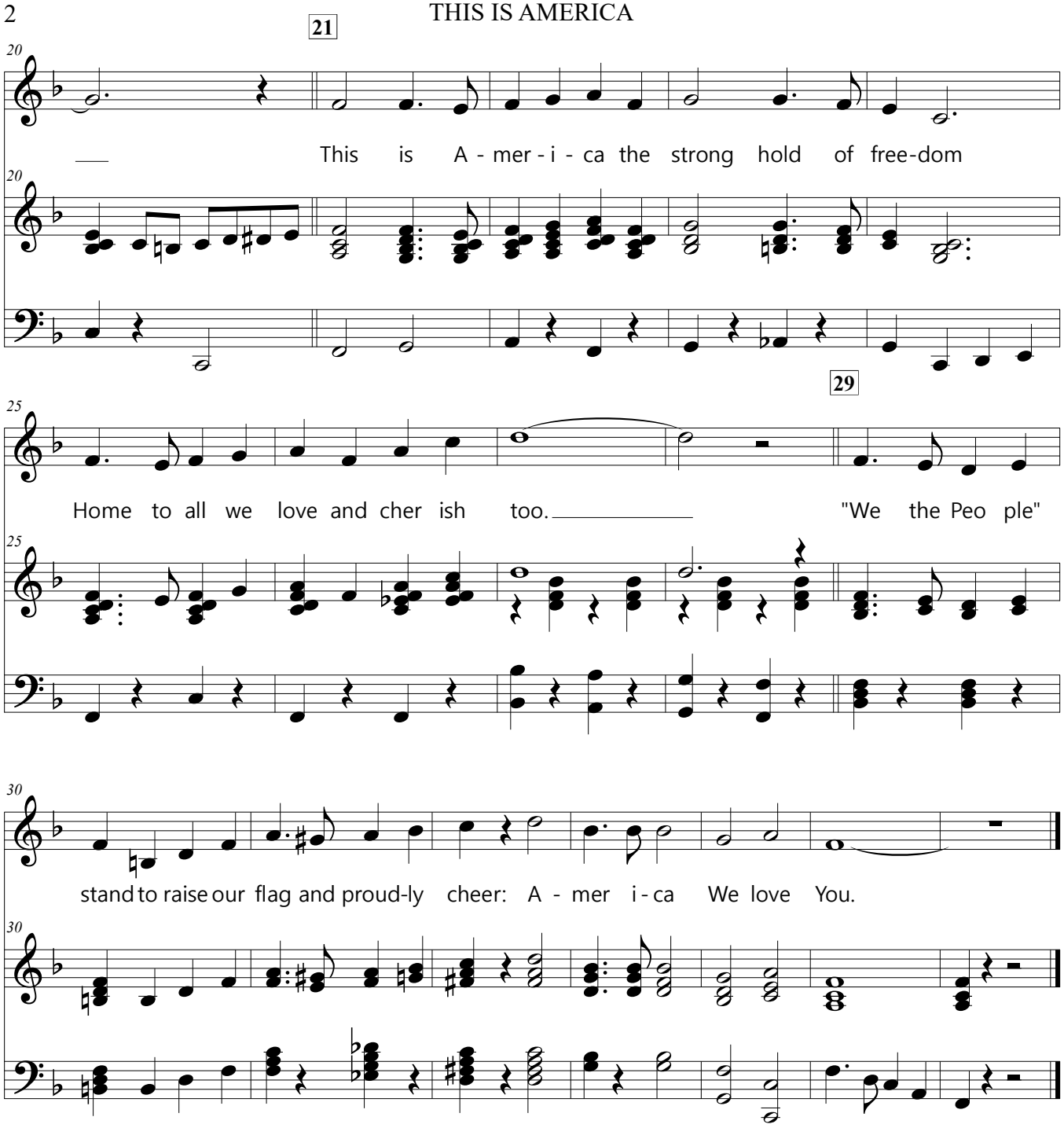
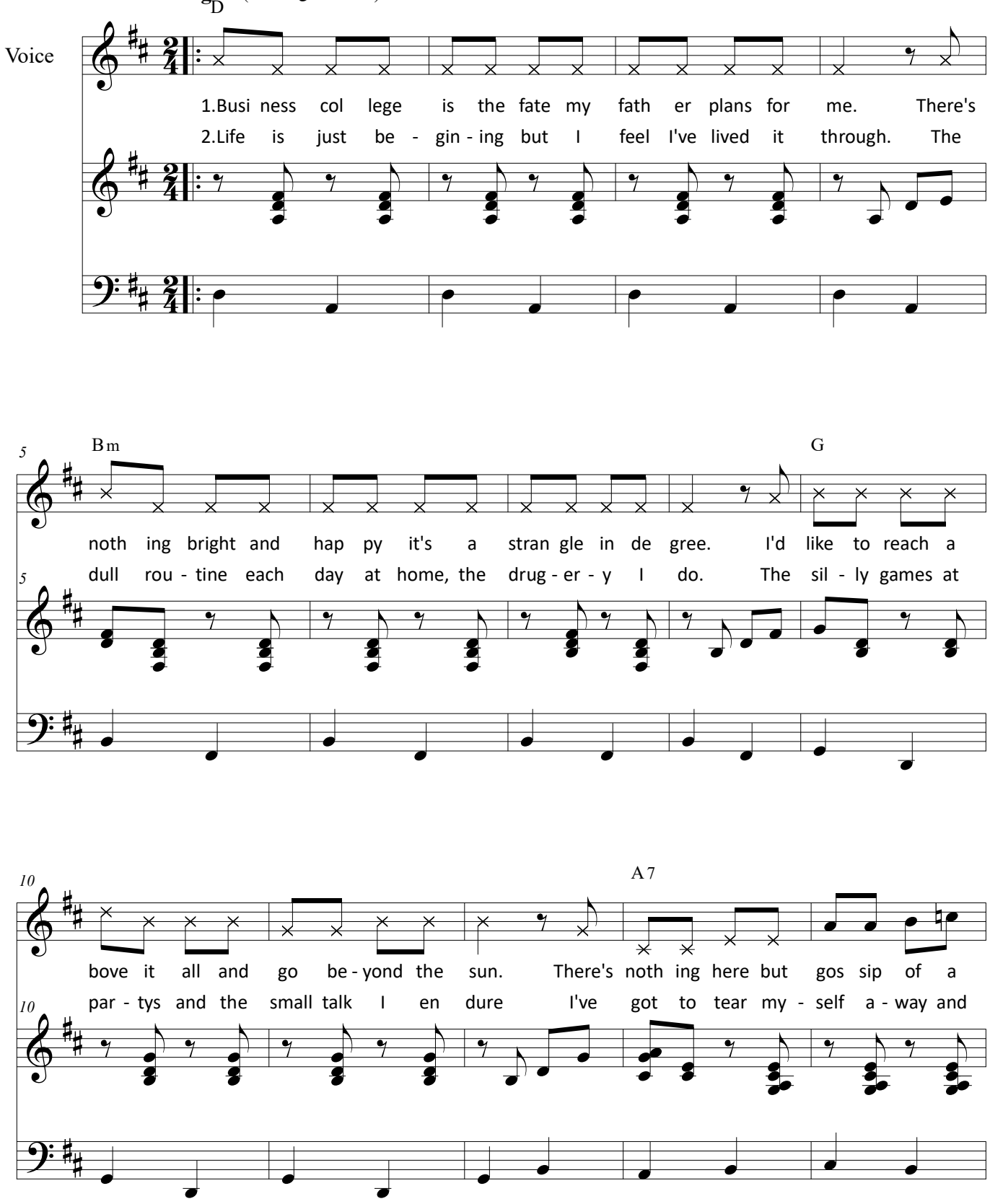

21
20
This is A - mer - i - ca the strong hold of free-dom
20
29
25
Home to all we love and cher ish too.
"We the Peo ple"
25
30
stand to raise our flag and proud-ly cheer: A - mer i - ca We love You.
30

I'm Bored

Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Act One-Scene 5
Gretchen

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 120)

D
Voice
1.Busi ness col lege is the fate my fath er plans for me. There's
2.Life is just be - gin - ing but I feel I've lived it through. The
5
Bm
G
noth ing bright and hap py it's a stran gle in de gree. I'd like to reach a
dull rou - tine each day at home, the drug - er - y I do. The sil - ly games at
10
A7
bove it all and go be - yond the sun. There's noth ing here but gos sip of a
par - tys and the small talk I en dure I've got to tear my - self a - way and

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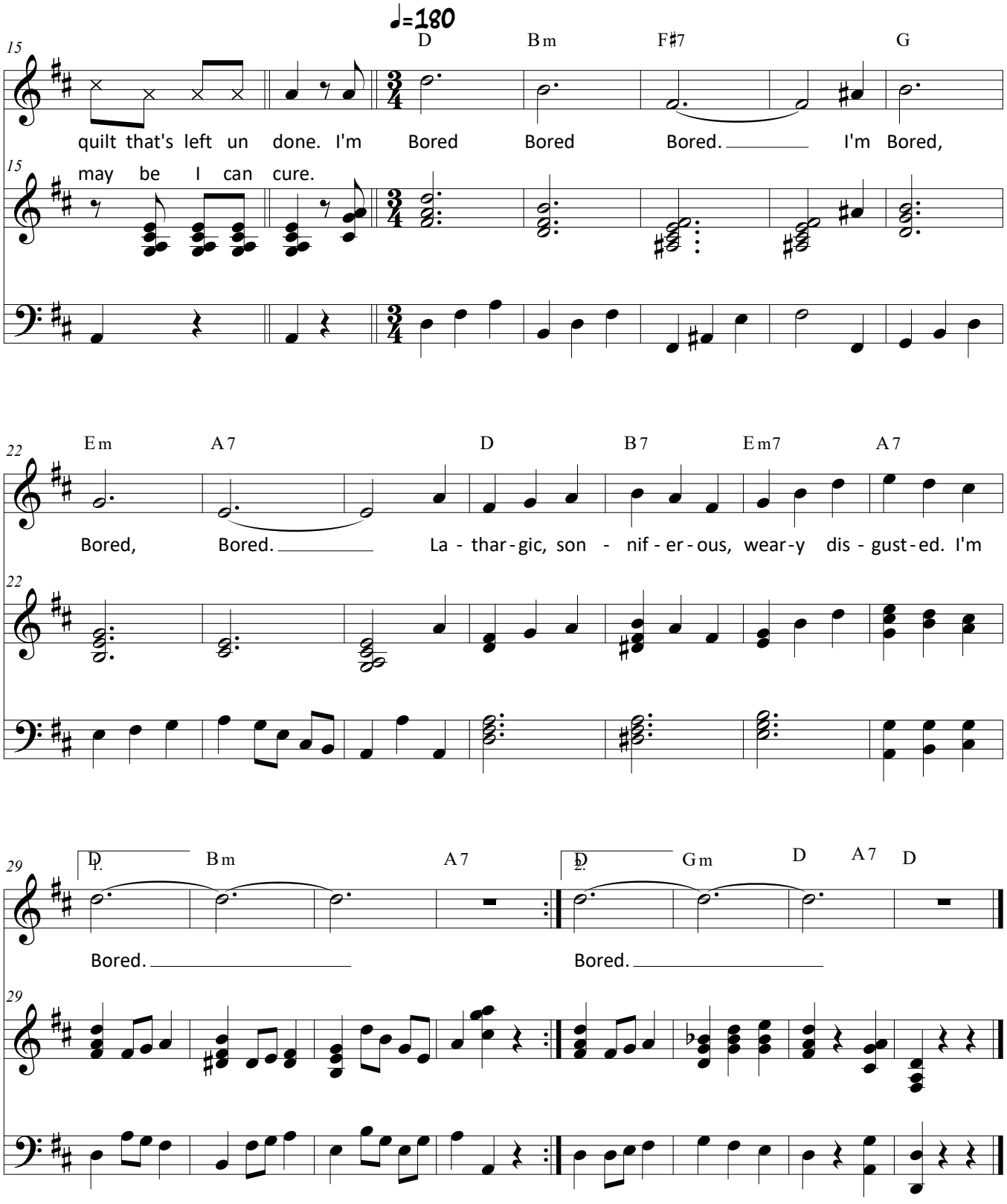
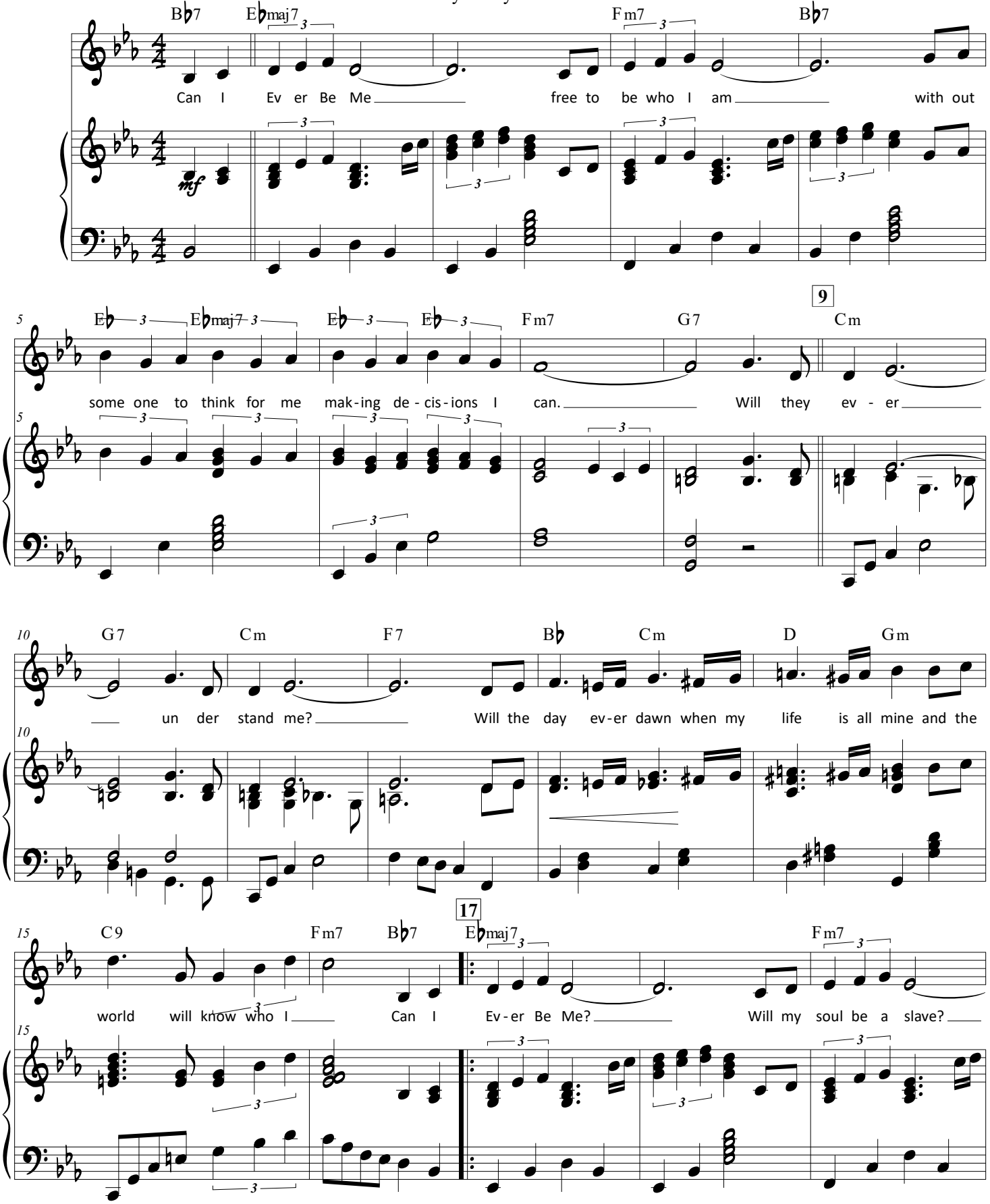

♩=180
15
D
Bm
F♯7
G
quilt that's left un done. I'm Bored Bored Bored. I'm Bored,
may be I can cure.
22
Em
A7
D
B7
Em7
A7
Bored, Bored. La - thar - gic, son - nif - er - ous, wear - y dis - gust - ed. I'm
29
1.
Bm
A7
2.
Gm
D
A7
D
Bored.
Bored.

CAN I EVER BE ME?

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music & Lyrcis by Paul Hemmer

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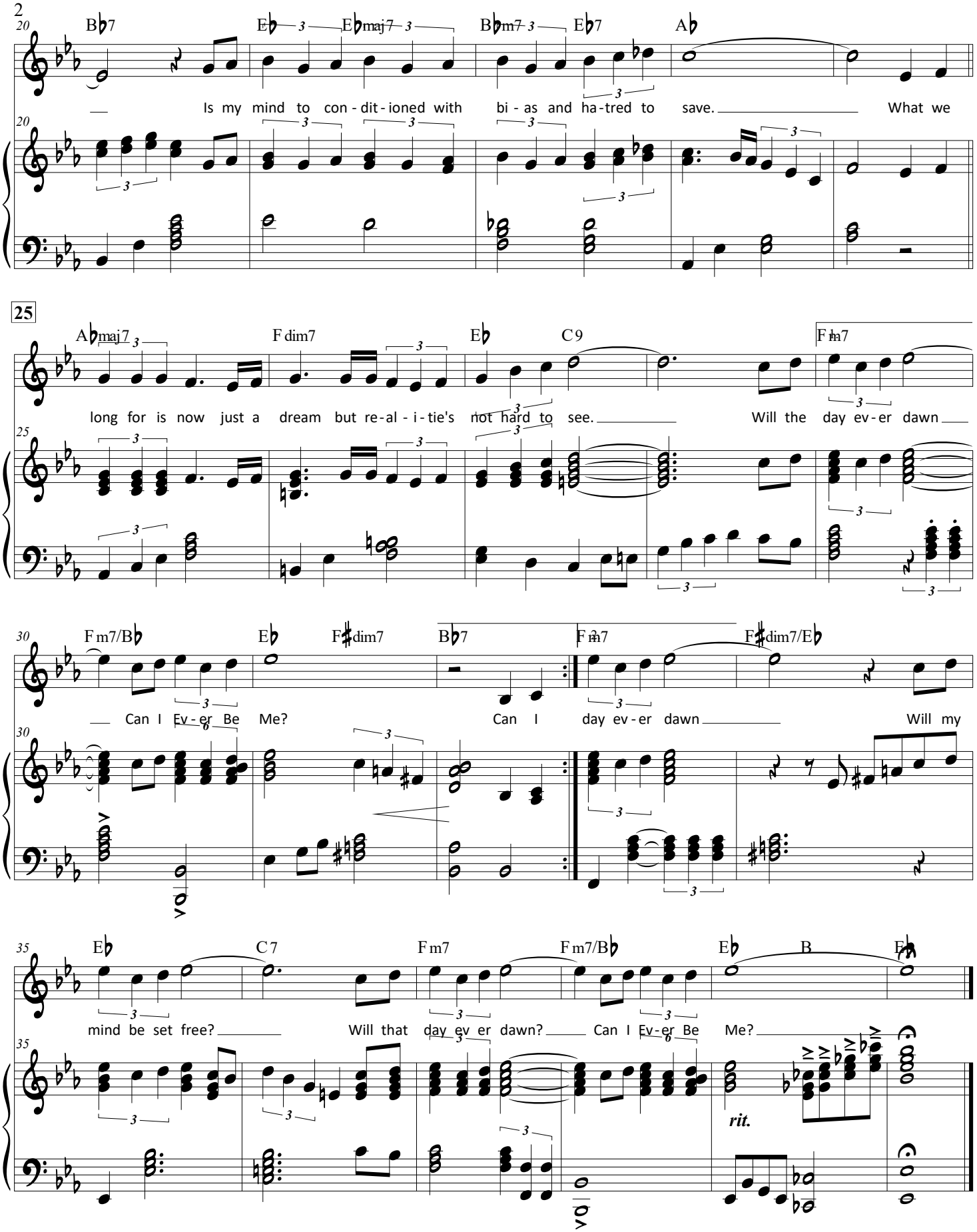
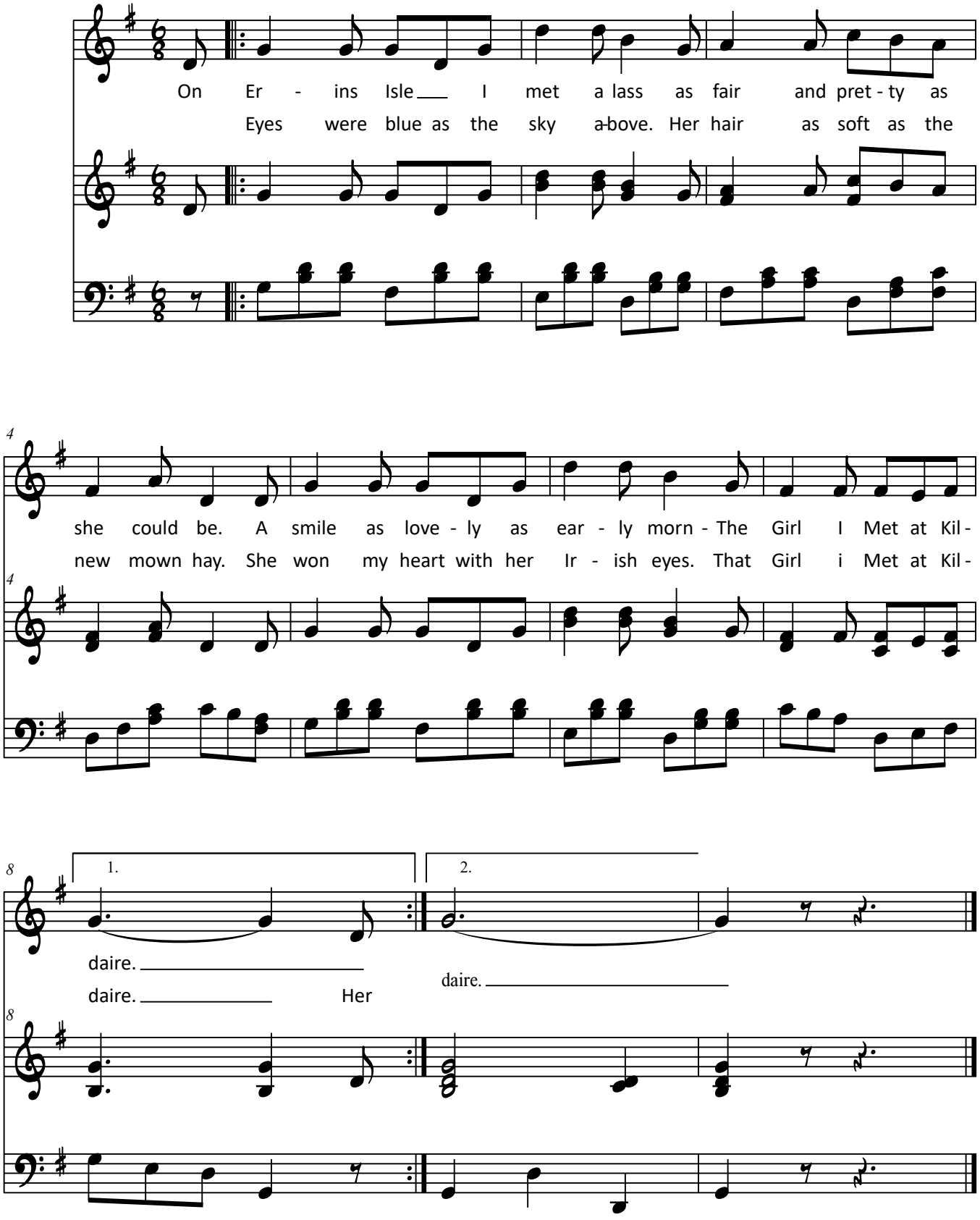

20
B♭7
E♭
E♭maj7
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭
Is my mind to con - dit - ioned with bi - as and ha-tred to save. What we
25
A♭maj7
F dim7
E♭
C 9
Fm7
long for is now just a dream but re-al - i-tie's not hard to see. Will the day ev-er dawn
30
Fm7/B♭
E♭
F♯dim7
B♭7
Fm7
F♯dim7/E♭
Can I Ev-er Be Me? Can I day ev-er dawn Will my
35
E♭
C 7
Fm7
Fm7/B♭
E♭
B
E♭
mind be set free? Will that day ev er dawn? Can I Ev-er Be Me?
rit.

The Girl I Met at Kildaire

(Irish aire and Clog Dance Theme)

Act 1 - Scene 11
and Act 2 Scene 3

Music and Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

The Irish mines and lads

On Er - ins Isle I met a lass as fair and pret - ty as
Eyes were blue as the sky above. Her hair as soft as the
she could be. A smile as love - ly as ear - ly morn - The Girl I Met at Kil -
new mown hay. She won my heart with her Ir - ish eyes. That Girl i Met at Kil -
1.
2.
daire.
daire.
Her
daire.

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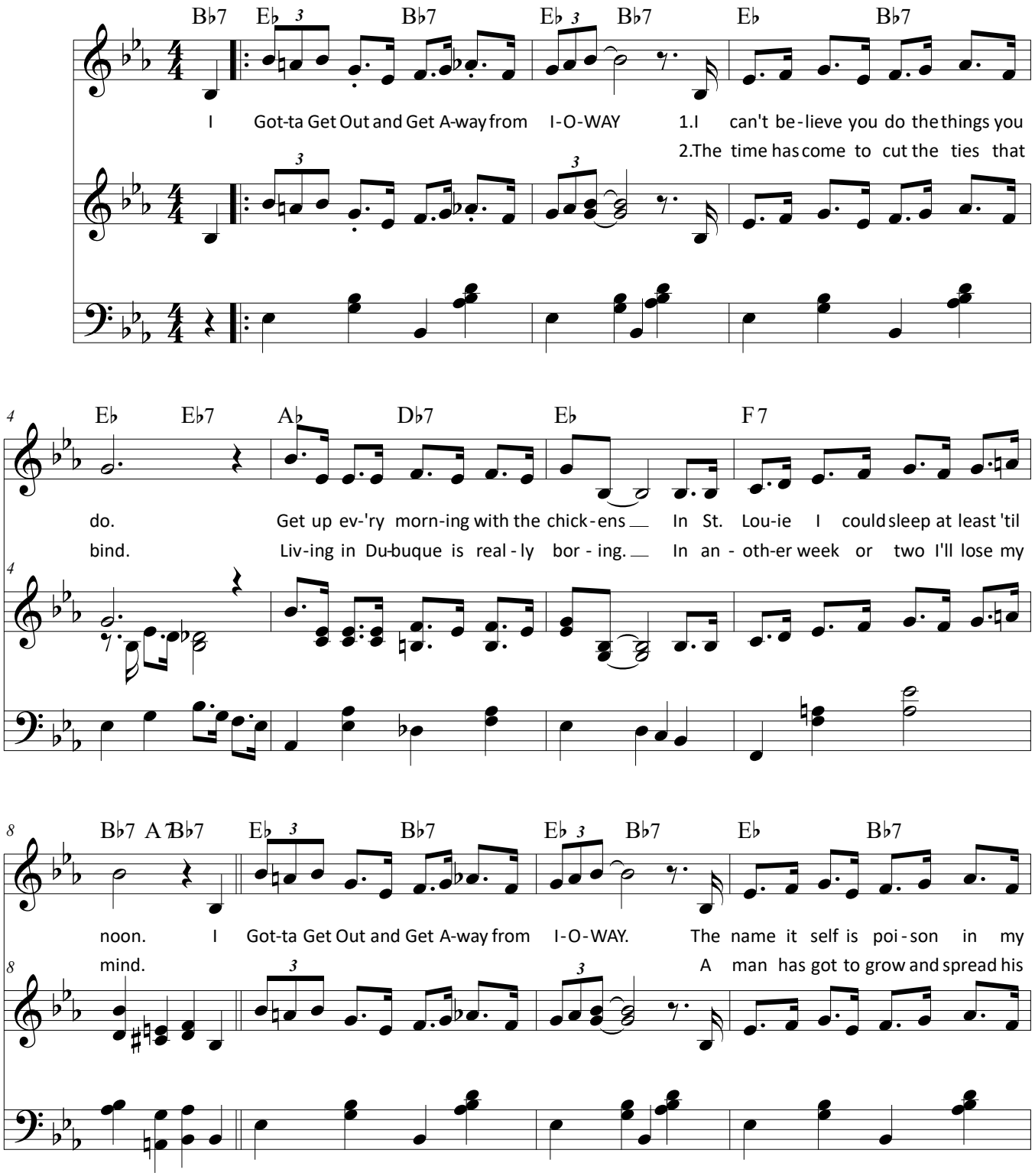
I Gotta Get Out & Get Away from I-o-way

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music and Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Act I - Scene 13
Ludwige & the Kids

B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7
I Got-ta Get Out and Get A-way from I-O-WAY 1.I can't be-lieve you do the things you
2.The time has come to cut the ties that
4
E♭ E♭7 A♭ D♭7 E♭ F 7
do. Get up ev-'ry morn-ing with the chick-ens In St. Lou-ie I could sleep at least 'til
bind. Liv-ing in Du-buque is real-ly bor-ing. In an-oth-er week or two I'll lose my
8
B♭7 A 7 B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7
noon. I Got-ta Get Out and Get A-way from I-O-WAY. The name it self is poi-son in my
mind. A man has got to grow and spread his

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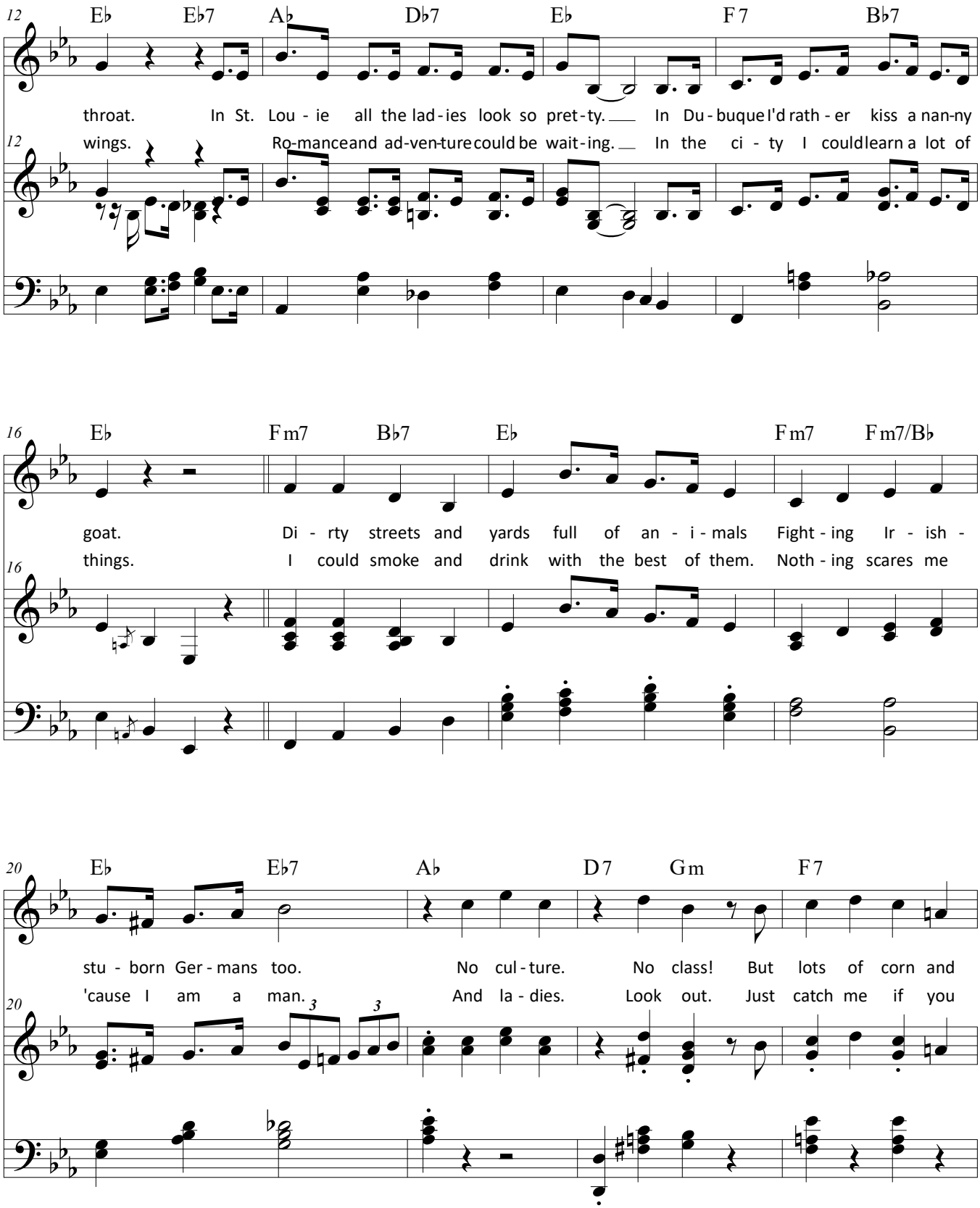
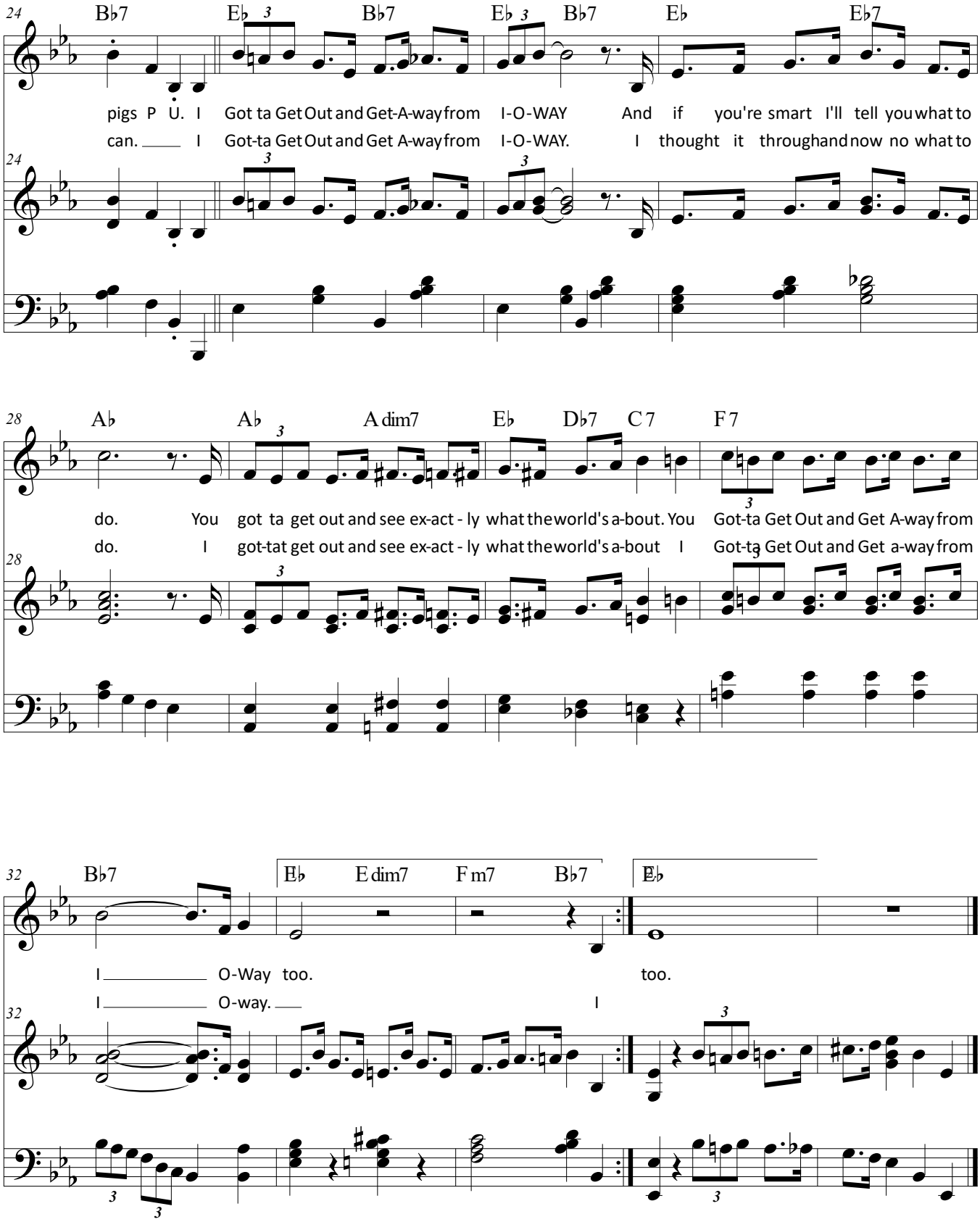
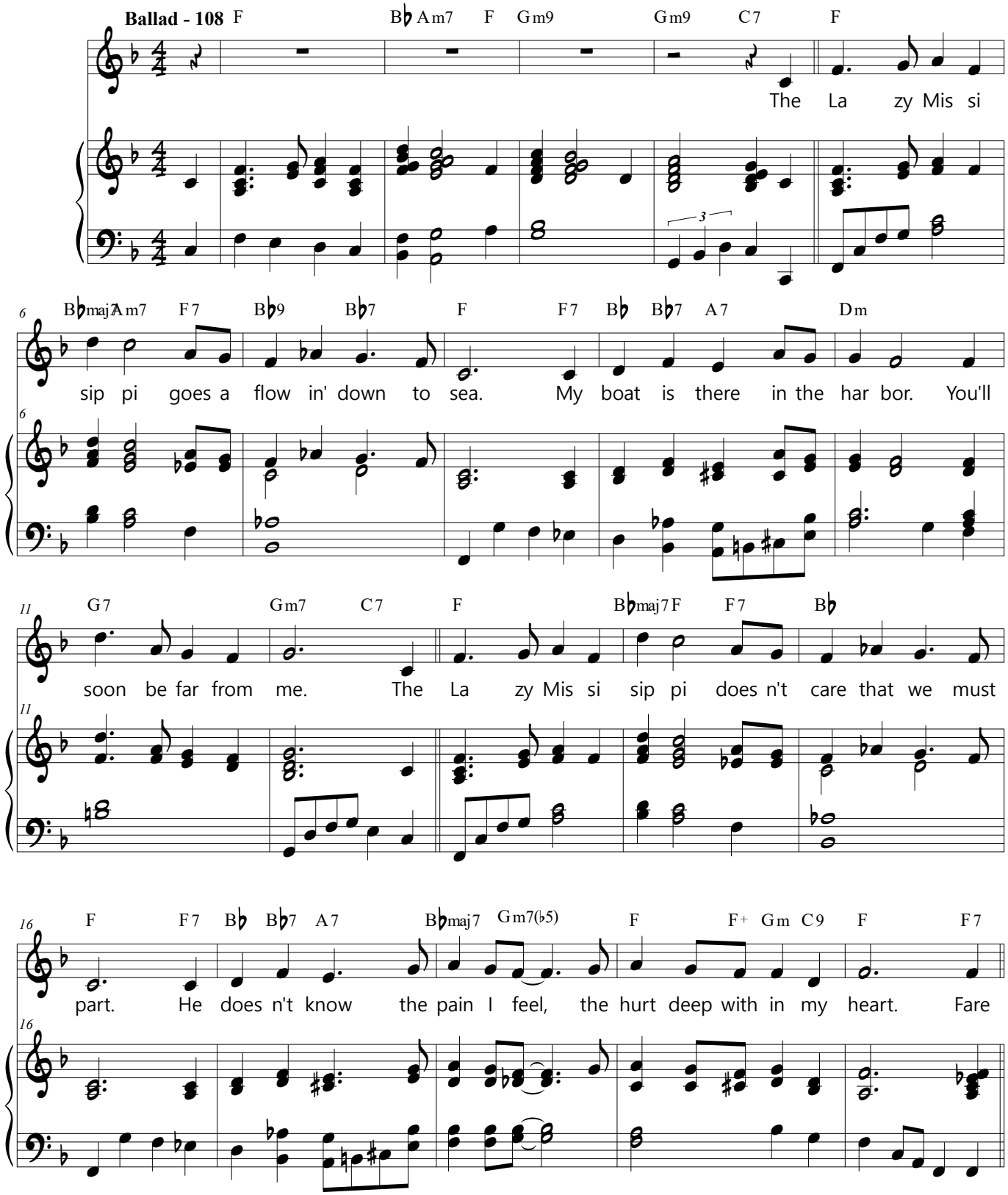

12
E♭ E♭7 A♭ D♭7 E♭ F 7 B♭7
throat. In St. Lou - ie all the lad - ies look so pret - ty. In Du - buque I'd rath - er kiss a nan-ny
wings. Ro-mance and ad-ven-ture could be wait - ing. In the ci - ty I could learn a lot of
16
E♭ F m7 B♭7 E♭ F m7 F m7/B♭
goat. Di - rty streets and yards full of an - i - mals Fight - ing Ir - ish -
things. I could smoke and drink with the best of them. Noth - ing scares me
20
E♭ E♭7 A♭ D 7 G m F 7
stu - born Ger - mans too. No cul - ture. No class! But lots of corn and
'cause I am a man. And la - dies. Look out. Just catch me if you

24
B♭7
E♭
B♭7
E♭
B♭7
E♭
E♭7
pigs P U. I Got ta Get Out and Get-A-way from I-O-WAY And if you're smart I'll tell you what to
can. I Got-ta Get Out and Get A-way from I-O-WAY. I thought it through and now no what to
28
A♭
A♭
A dim7
E♭
D♭7
C 7
F 7
do. You got ta get out and see ex-act - ly what the world's a-bout. You Got-ta Get Out and Get A-way from
do. I got-tat get out and see ex-act - ly what the world's a-bout I Got-ta Get Out and Get a-way from
32
B♭7
E♭
E dim7
F m7
B♭7
E♭
I O-Way too. too.
I O-way. I

The Lazy Mississippi

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

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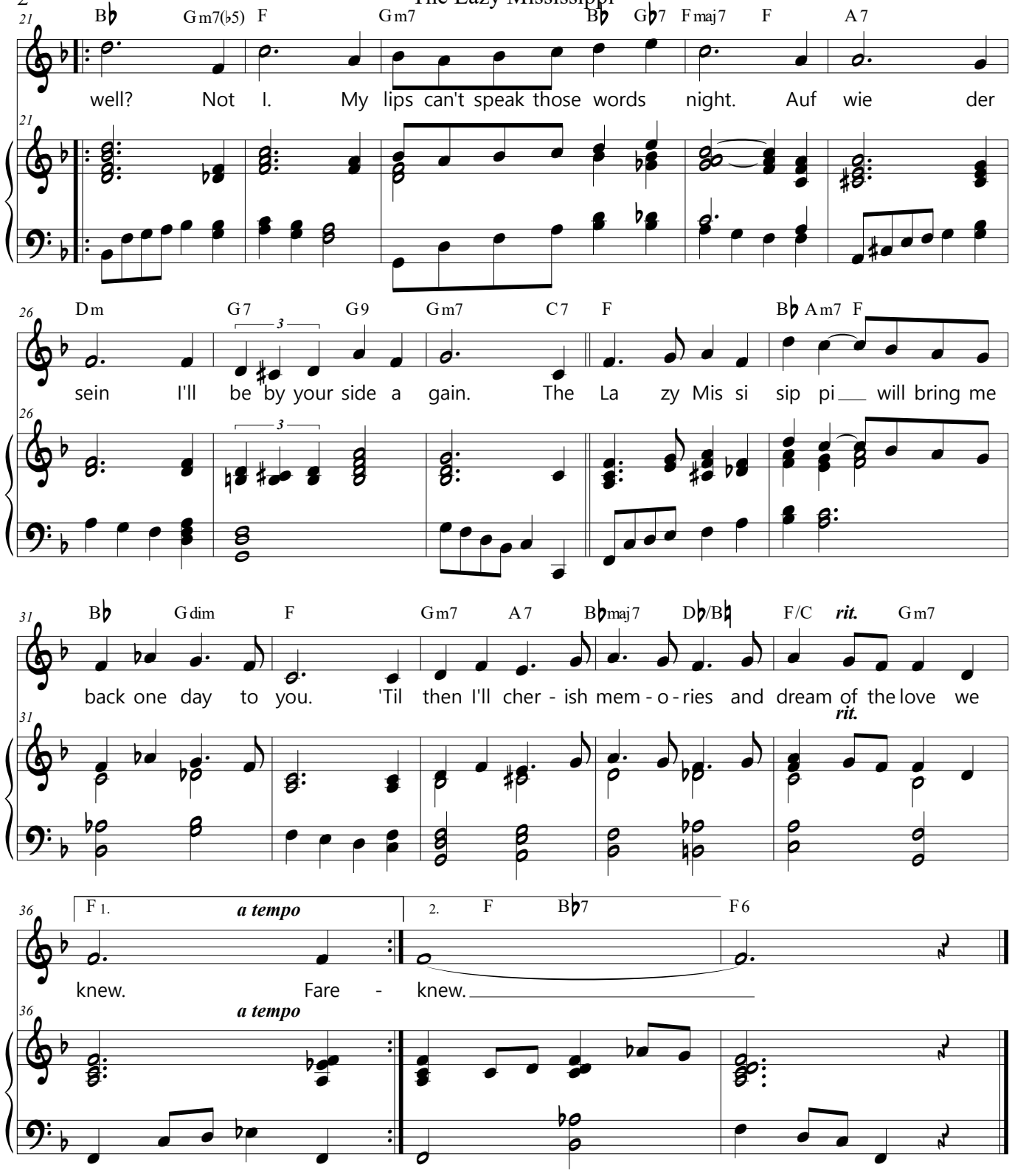
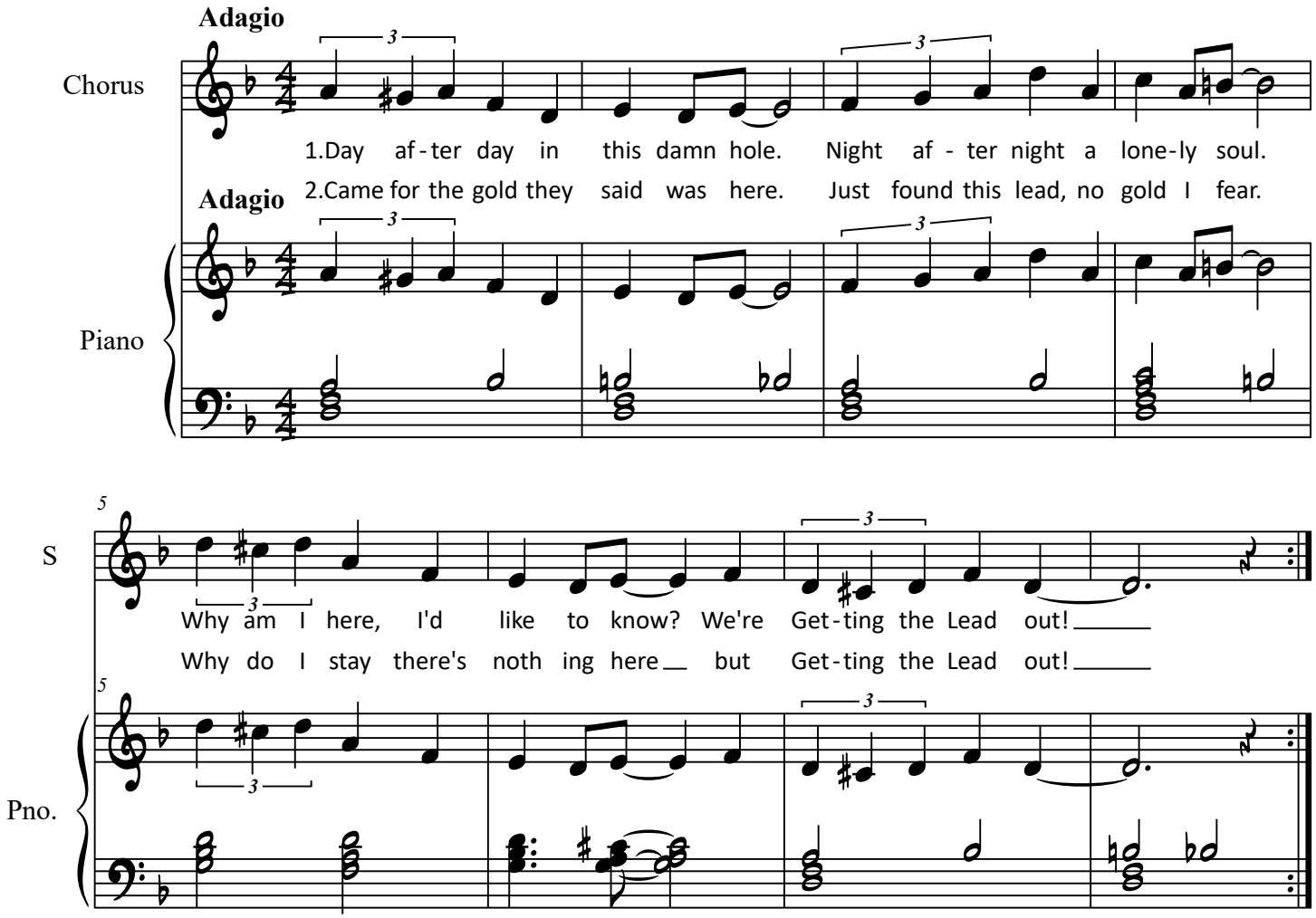

21
B♭ Gm7(♭5) F Gm7 B♭ G♭7 Fmaj7 F A7
well? Not I. My lips can't speak those words night. Auf wie der
26
Dm G7 G9 Gm7 C7 F B♭ Am7 F
sein I'll be by your side a gain. The La zy Mis si sip pi will bring me
31
B♭ Gdim F Gm7 A7 B♭maj7 D♭/B♮ F/C rit. Gm7
back one day to you. 'Til then I'll cher - ish mem - o - ries and dream of the love we
rit.
36
F 1. a tempo 2. F B♭7 F6
knew. Fare - knew.
a tempo

Gettin' the Lead Out!

The choral lead-up to the ballet

music and lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Adagio
Chorus
1.Day af-ter day in this damn hole. Night af - ter night a lone-ly soul.
2.Came for the gold they said was here. Just found this lead, no gold I fear.
Adagio
Piano
S
Why am I here, I'd like to know? We're Get-ting the Lead out!
Why do I stay there's noth ing here but Get-ting the Lead out!
Pno.

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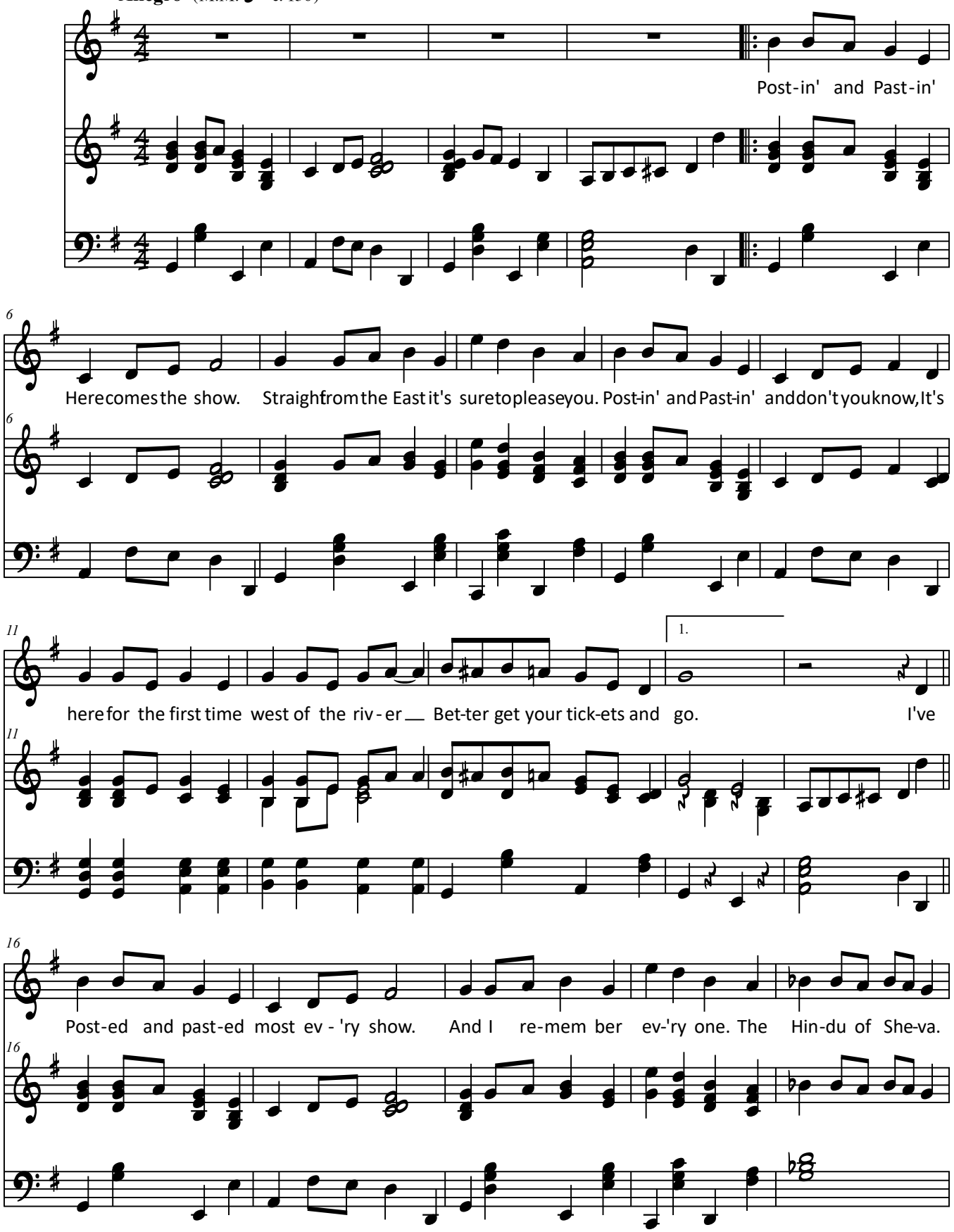
Postin' and Pastin'

(from "Get the Lead Out")

Act II - Scene One
Main Street

Music and Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 130)

Post-in' and Past-in'
Here comes the show. Straight from the East it's sure to please you. Post-in' and Past-in' and don't you know, It's
here for the first time west of the riv - er Bet-ter get your tick-ets and go. I've
Post-ed and past-ed most ev - 'ry show. And I re-mem ber ev-'ry one. The Hin-du of She-va.

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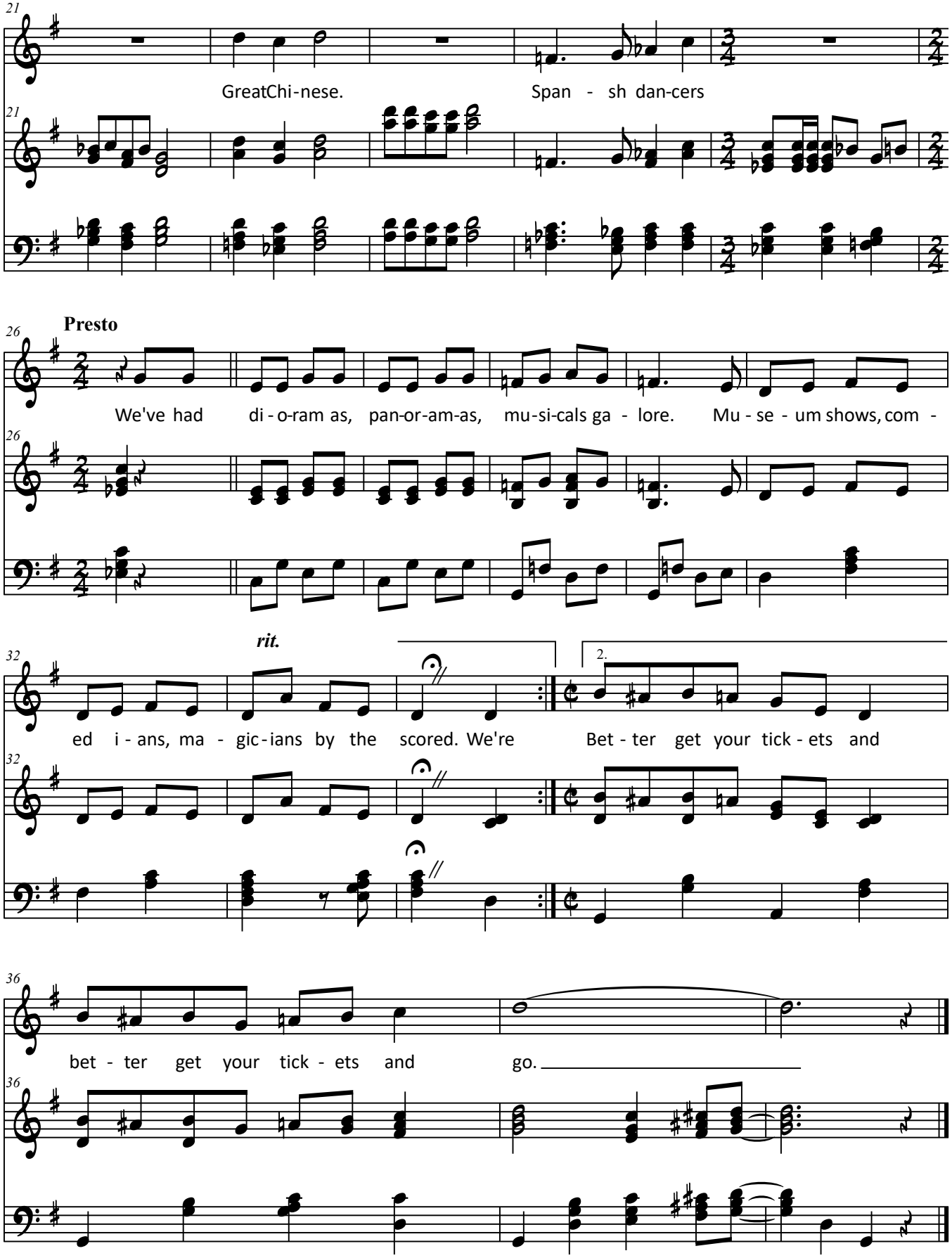
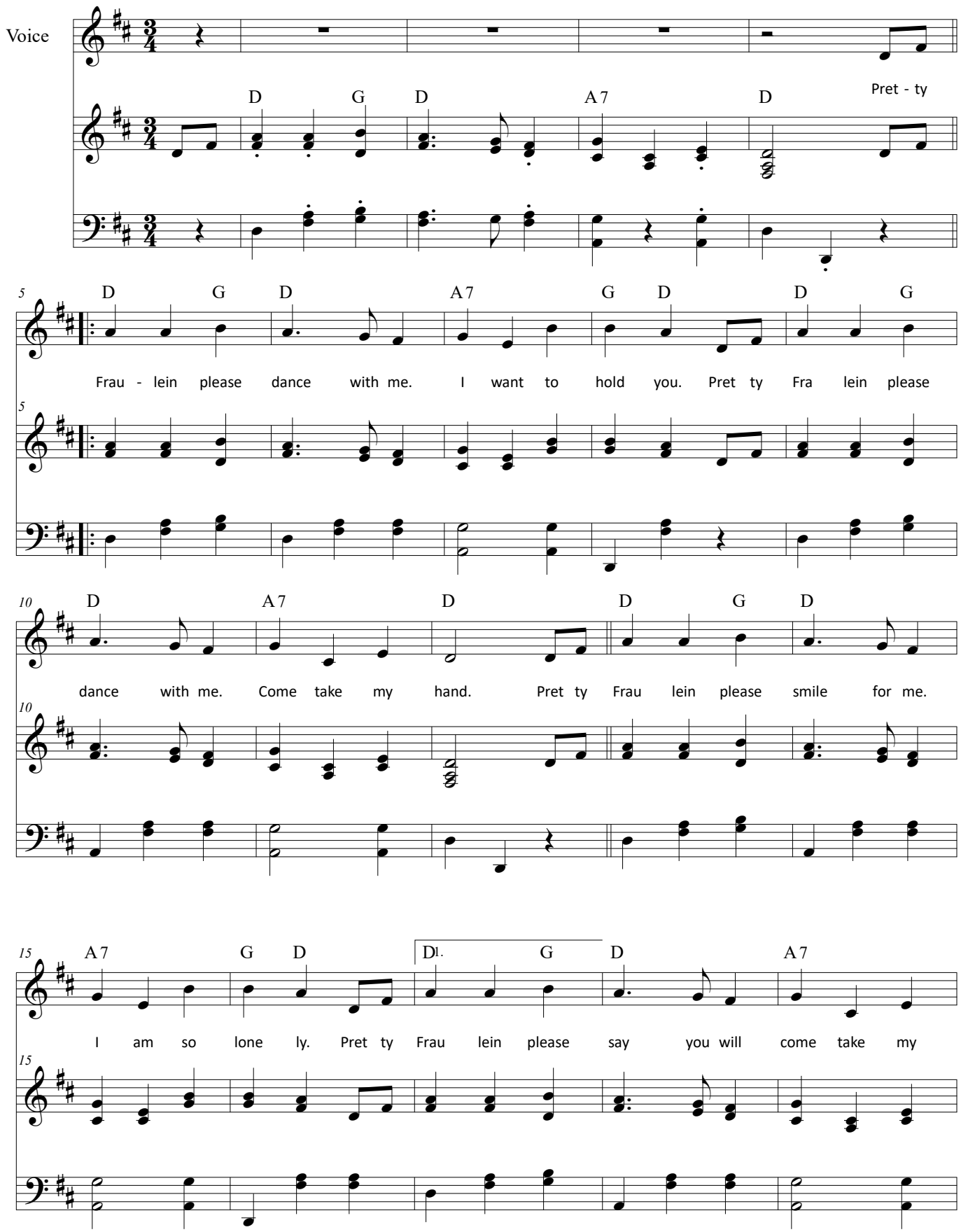

21
GreatChi-nese.
Span - sh dan-cers
Presto
26
We've had di - o-ram as, pan-or-am-as, mu-si-cals ga - lore. Mu - se - um shows, com -
rit.
32
ed i - ans, ma - gic - ians by the scored. We're
2.
Bet - ter get your tick - ets and
36
bet - ter get your tick - ets and
go.

Pretty Fraulein

Vocal-Piano

(from "Get the Lead Out")

Music & Lyrics by Paul Hemmer

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c. 160)

Voice
D G D A7 D
Pret - ty
5
D G D A7 G D D G
Frau - lein please dance with me. I want to hold you. Pret ty Fra lein please
10
D A7 D D G D
dance with me. Come take my hand. Pret ty Frau lein please smile for me.
15
A7 G D 1. D G D A7
I am so lone ly. Pret ty Frau lein please say you will come take my

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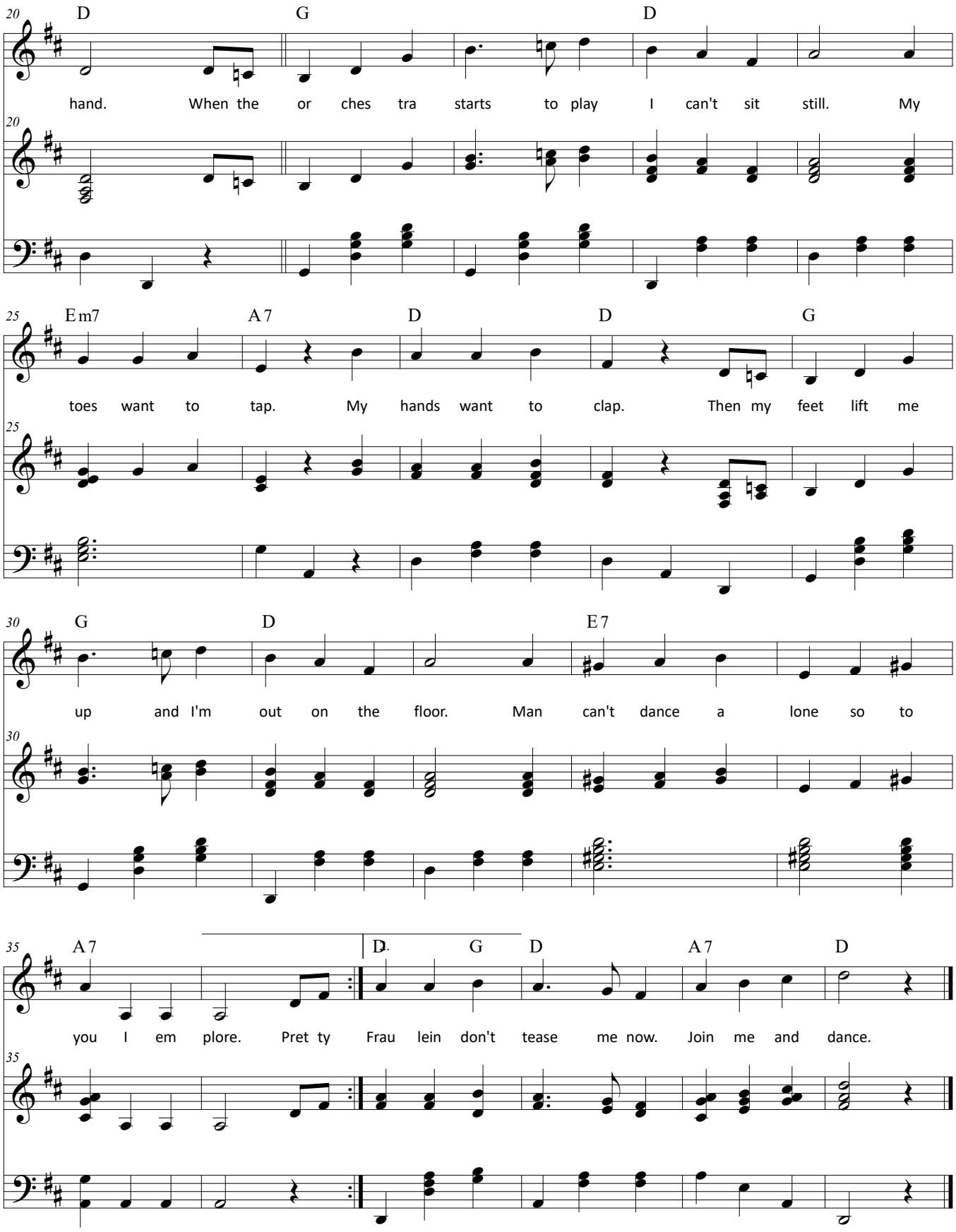
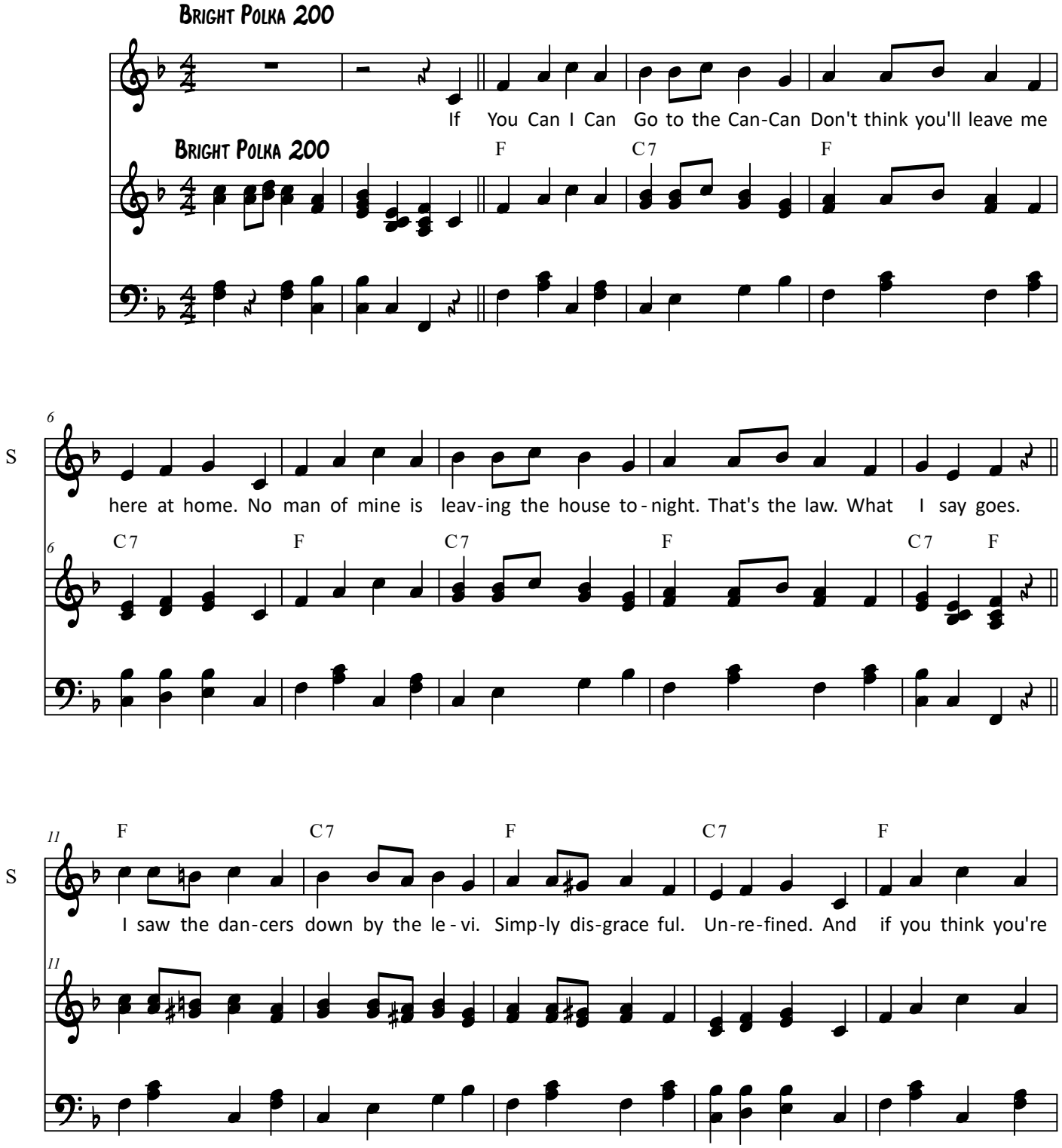

20
D
G
D
hand. When the or ches tra starts to play I can't sit still. My
25
E m7
A 7
D
D
G
toes want to tap. My hands want to clap. Then my feet lift me
30
G
D
E 7
up and I'm out on the floor. Man can't dance a lone so to
35
A 7
D.
G
D
A 7
D
you I em plore. Pret ty Frau lein don't tease me now. Join me and dance.

If You Can, I Can Go to the Can-Can

(from "Get the Lead Out!")

Music and Lyrcis by Paul Hemmer

Bright Polka 200
If You Can I Can Go to the Can-Can Don't think you'll leave me
Bright Polka 200
F C7 F
6
S
here at home. No man of mine is leav-ing the house to-night. That's the law. What I say goes.
6
C7 F C7 F C7 F
11
S
F C7 F C7 F
I saw the dan-cers down by the le-vi. Simp-ly dis-grace ful. Un-re-fined. And if you think you're
11

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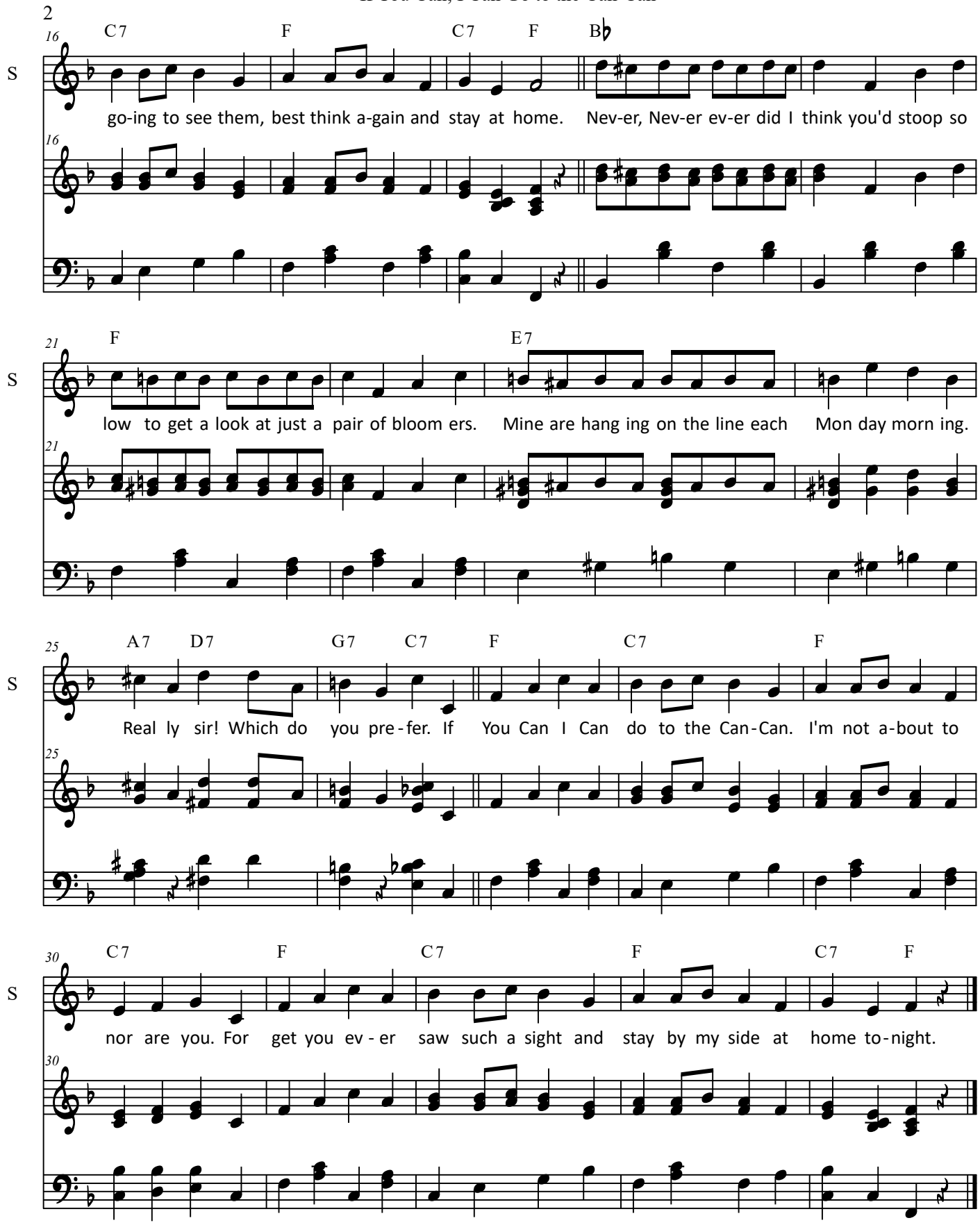
16
C7 F C7 F B♭
S
go-ing to see them, best think a-gain and stay at home. Nev-er, Nev-er ev-er did I think you'd stoop so
16
21
F E7
S
low to get a look at just a pair of bloom ers. Mine are hang ing on the line each Mon day morn ing.
21
25
A7 D7 G7 C7 F C7 F
S
Real ly sir! Which do you pre-fer. If You Can I Can do to the Can-Can. I'm not a-bout to
25
30
C7 F C7 F C7 F
S
nor are you. For get you ev-er saw such a sight and stay by my side at home to-night.
30